THE RARE JEWEL OF CHRISTIAN CONTENTMENT.

Wherein is shewed,

1 *What* CONTENTMENT *is.*
2 *The holy Art or Mysterie of it.*
3 *Several* Lessons *that Christ teacheth to work the Heart to* Contentment.
4 *The Excellencies of it.*
5 *The Evils of Murmuring.*
6 *The Aggravations of the sin of Murmuring.*

By JEREMIAH BURROUGHS.

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To the READER.

THe worthie Man, especially in his latter times, was surrounded (through Gods blessing on him) with a verry great confluence of what might give forth Contentment to a vast spirit of his Rank and Calling. He was enriched with a large measure of abilities and opportunities in serving his Lord; (to glorifie whom, and do much good to others, is the divine part of a Man gracious (which he was) the highest and most solid Satisfaction, and in many respects exceeds what personal Communion with God, singly considered, brings in) Besides, he lived and died in a fulness of honour and esteem with the best of Men, of Saints; yea, the worst of enemies: Likewise of Estate, and outward Comforts, within his sphear and ranck; all which might and did afford Contentment to what was outward in him. In the midst of these, his studie was to find out a more sublime way, and hidden art of Self-sufficiencie, than was in the power of all things to contribute or teach; Such a skill as did not onely poise and compose his spirit in the present enjoyment of all, but might fortifie and furnish him with provision for the future against the loss of all, in times wherein no man knoweth what evil will be in the Earth. This Mark, his first Lines shew, he shot at. This Art, some Philosophers of old pretend themselves Masters of, and to instruct others in, through the assistance of Natural and Moral Elements, elevated to the utmost height their Principles could carrie

them; but in vain: Their Chymistrie, in this kind, being able to produce no more but a sullen obstinacie and obdurateness of mind. The Natural Spirit of a Man, *feeling it self greater than all Creatures, gathering up, and consolidating its self into its self, is able (as* Solomon *saies)* to sustain its own, and all other infirmities. *But that* Autarchy *this Author here presents, is a Mysterie, which* none of these Princes of the World knew, or the Wisdom of Man teacheth, but the Holy Ghost teacheth; *and which few, but those that are* perfect, *do attain; Teaching the soul to denie it self into weakness, emptiness, in, and to its self, and all things else; and thus dissolved to unitie it self, to him who onely hath blessedness and all-sufficiencie, with whom associated and made intimate, it melts it self into all His Interests, making them its own, and thereby comes to have all that All-sufficiencie of the High God, to be its Self-sufficiencie: And then, what state can that soul be in, wherein it may not be content? seeing it hath God to be the chiefest comfort in its best times, and onely comfort in its worst. This, though it be the inheritance of every Saint, in the right and title to it, yet the possession and enjoyment of it, depends upon an improvement of this inheritance, and that upon a skill which is to be* learned *by experience and much exercise (as* Paul *speaks)* I have learned in whatsoever estate I am, therewith to be content. *This piece of learning, this serious spirited Man inured himself unto, and* digging *for it as* Rubies (*as* Solomon's *Scholar for Wisdom) hath found it, and hath hewn forth this* Jewel *(a Title given neither by himself, nor by us the Publishers, to the Subject it self, yet the Materials themselves deserving it) out of the Rock, and hath artificially cut it) that the innate Rays, of this so glorious a Grace, might shine forth to others. And here it comes to be presented,*

ed, though ſet forth as the richeſt Jewels *are, often for a while, in ruder metal, until bargained for, but then are placed in Tablets worthie of them. The onely ſeat this is ordained for, is, the precious Tablets of Mens Hearts, in, and from which alone, the native luſtre of it will be made conſpicuous.* Reader, *buy it, ſet, and wear it there, and it* ſhall (*as* Solomon *ſpeaks,* Prov. 3. 22, *&c.*) be life unto thy ſoul, and grace unto thy neck: Thou ſhalt not be afraid when thou lieſt down; yea, thy ſleep ſhall be ſweet unto thee: for the Lord will be thy confidence.

Thomas Goodwyn. *William Bridge.*
Sydrach Simpſon. *John Yates.*
William Greenhil. *William Adderly.*
Philip Nye.

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FINIS.

THE

THE RARE JEWEL OF CHRISTIAN CONTENTMENT.

PHILIPPIANS, 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

HEre is a very *seasonable Cordial* to revive the drooping spirits of the Saints, in these sad and sinking times: For the *hour of temptation* is already come upon all the world, to trie the Inhabitants of the earth; and in special, this is the day of *Jacob*'s troubles in our own bowels.

Our *great Apostle* experimentally holds forth in this Gospel-Text, the very life and soul of all practical Divinitie; wherein we may plainly read his own proficiencie in Christs School; and what lesson every Christian, that would evidence the power and growth of Godlines in his own soul, must necessarily learn from him.

These words are brought in by *Paul*, as a plain Argument to perswade the *Philippians*, that he did not seek after great things in the world, and that he sought not *theirs*, but *them:* he did not pass for a great estate; he had better things to take up his heart withal. I do not speak (saith he) in respect of want, [*For*] whether I have or have not, my heart is fully satisfied, I have enough; *I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

I have learned] Contentment in every condition is a great art, a spiritual Mysterie; It is to be learned, and so to be learned as a Mysterie; and therefore verse 12. he affirms, *I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound, every where and in all things I am instructed:* The word μεμύημαι, which is translated [*Instructed*] is derived from that word μυστήριον, which signifies *Mysterie*; and

it is as much as if he had said, I have learned the mysterie of this business. Contentment is to be learned as a great Mysterie; & those that are throughly trained up in that art, have learned a deep *Mysterie*; which is, a *Sampsons* riddle to a natural man. [*I have learned it.*] It is not now to learn; neither had I it at first; I have attained it, though with much adoe, and now by the grace of God I am become Master of this Art.

In whatsoever state I am.] The word [*State*] is not in the Original, but, * *In what I am*, that is, in whatsoever concerns or befals me, whether I have little or nothing at all.

ἐν οἷς εἰμι.

Therewith to be content] The word * which we render *Content* here, hath in the Original much elegancy and fulness of signification in it. In strictness of Phrase it is onely attributed unto God, who hath stiled himself *God All-sufficient*, as resting wholly satisfied in and with himself alone; but he is pleased freely to communicate of his fulness to the creature, so that from God in Christ the Saints *receive grace for grace*, *John*, 1. 16. insomuch that there is in them an answerableness of the same grace in their proportion that is in Christ. And in this sense *Paul* saith, I have a *Self-sufficiency*, as the word notes.

αὐτάρκεια εἶναι.

But hath *Paul* a self-sufficiency you will say, How are we sufficient of our selves? Our Apostle affirms in another case, *That we are not sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves*, 2 *Cor.* 3. 5. His meaning therefore must be, I find a sufficiency of satisfaction in my own heart, through the grace of Christ that is in me; though I have not outward comforts and worldly accommodations to supply my necessities, yet I enjoy portion enough betwixt Christ and my own soul abundantly to satisfie me in every condition. And this interpretation is suitable to that place, *Prov.* 14. 14. *A good man is satisfied from himself*; and agreeable to what he verifies of himself in another place; that *though he had nothing, yet he possessed all things*; because he had right to the Covenant and Promise, which virtually contains all, and an in interest in Christ the Fountain and good of all, and having that, no marvail he saith, that in whatsoever state he was in, he was content. Thus you have the genuine interpretation of the text. I shall not make any division of the words, because I take them onely to prosecute that *one duty* most necessary, *viz.* The quieting and comforting the hearts of Gods people under the troubles and changes they meet withal, in these heart-shaking times. And the Doctrinal conclusion is in brief this.

Doct. *That to be well skill'd in the Mystery of Christian Contentment is, the Duty, Glory, and Excellency of a Christian.*

This Evangelical Truth is held forth sufficiently in Scripture; yet take one or two paralel places more for the confirmation of it. 1. *Tim.* 6. 6, & 8. you have both the duty expresst, and the glory thereof: *Having food and raiment* (saith he ver. 8.) *let us be therewith content*, there is the duty; *But Godliness with Contentment is great gain*, vers. 6. there is the glory and excellency of it: as if Godliness were not gain except there were Contentment withal. The like exhortation you have in *Heb.* 13. 5. *Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have.* I do not find any

any Apostle, or Writer of Scripture treat so much of this Spiritual Mistery of Contentment, as this our Apostle hath done throughout his Epistles.

For the clear opening and proving of this practical conclusion, I shall endeavor to demonstrate these four things;

First, The nature of this Christian Contentment, what it is. Secondly, The Art and Mystery of it. Thirdly, What those lessons are that must be learned to work the heart to Contentment. Fourthly, Wherein the glorious excellencies of this grace doth principally consist.

Concerning the first, take this description; *Christian Contentment is that sweet, inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, freely submitting to, and taking complacencie in Gods wise, and fatherly dispose in every condition.*

I shall break open this description, for it is a box of precious ointment, very comfortable and usefull for troubled hearts, in troubled times and conditions.

First *Contentment* (I say) *is a sweet, [inward] heart-thing, it is a work of the spirit within-doors:* It is not onely a not-seeking help to our selves by outward violence, or a forbearance of discontented murmuring expressions, in froward words and carriages against God or others; but it is the inward submission of the heart. *Psal.* 62.1. *Truly my soul waiteth upon God*; and vers 5. *My soul wait thou onely upon God*, so it is in your books; but the words may be translated as rightly, *My soul be thou silent unto God*; *Hold thy peace, O my soul:* Not onely the tongue must hold its peace, but the soul must be silent: Many may sit down silently, forbearing discontended expressions, yet are inwardly swoln with discontentment; now this manifesteth a perplexed distemper, and a great frowardness in their hearts: And God, notwithstanding their outward silence, hears the peevish fretting language of their souls. The shoo may be smooth and neat without, whilst the flesh is pinched within: There may be much calmness and stilness outwardly, and yet wonderfull confusion, bitterness, disturbance, and vexation within. Some are so weak that they are not able to contain the disquietness of their own spirits, but in words and behaviour discover what wofull perturbations there are within, their spirits being like the raging Sea, casting forth nothing but mire and dirt, being not onely troublesom to themselves, but to all those they live with: Others there are, who are able to keep in such distempers of heart, (as *Judas* did when he betrayed Christ with a kiss,) but still they boyl inwardly, and eat like a Canker: As David speaks concerning some, whose words are smoother than honey, & butter, and yet have war in their hearts; & as he saith in another place, whilst *I kept silence my bones waxed old*; so these, whilst there is a serene calm upon their tongues, have yet blustering storms in their spirits, and whilst they keep silence, their hearts are troubled, and even worn away with anguish and vexation; they have peace and quiet outwardly, but war from the unruly and turbulent workings of their hearts that is within. If the attainment to a true Contentment were as easie as keeping quiet outwardly, there need be no great learning of it, it might be had with less skill and strength than an Apostle had; yea, than an ordinary Christian hath, or may have. Therefore certainly there is a great deal more in it than can be attained by common gifts, and ordinary power of reason, which often bridles in nature. It is a heart-business.

Secondly, *It is the quiet of the heart*; All is sedate and still there, and to understand this the better; This quiet gracious frame of spirit, it is not opposed.

1. *To a due sense of affliction.* God doth give leave to his people to be sensible of what they suffer: Christ doth not say, Do not count that a cross which is a cross, but take up your cross daily. As it is in the body natural, if the body takes physick, and is not able to bear it, but presently vomits it up, or if it be not at all sensible, if it stir not the body, either of these waies the physick doth no good, but argues the body much distempered, and will hardly be cured. So it is with the spirits of men under afflictions; if either they cannot bear Gods Potions, but cast them up again, or are not sensible of them, and their souls are no more stir'd by them, than the body is by a draught of small beer, it is a sad symptom that their souls are in a dangerous, and almost incurable condition. So that this inward quietness is not in opposition to the sense of affliction: for indeed there were no true Contentment, if you were not apprehensive and sensible of your afflictions, when God is angry. It is not opposed.

2. *To an orderly making our moan and complaint to God, and to our friends.* Though a Christian ought to be quiet under Gods correcting hand, yet he may without any breach of Christian Contentment complain to God; (as one of the Ancients saith) though not with a tumultuous clamour and shreeeking out in a perplexed passion, yet in a quier, still, submissive way he may unbosom his heart unto God. And likewise communicatee his sad condition to his gracious friends, shewing them how God hath dealt with him, and how heavy the affliction is upon him, that they may speak a word in due season to his wearied soul.

It is not opposed.

3. *To all lawfull seeking out for help into another condition, or simply endeavouring to be delivered out of the present afflictions by the use of lawfull means.* No, I may lay in provision for my deliverance, and use Gods means, waiting on him, because I know not but that it may be his Will to alter my condition, and so far as he leads me, I may follow his providence, it is but my duty. God is thus far mercifully indulgent to our weaknesse, and he will not take it ill at our hands, if by earnest and importunate prayer we seek unto him for deliverance, till we know his good pleasure therein. And certainly thus seeking for help with such a submission, and holy resignation of spirit, to be delivered when God will, and as God will, and how God will, so that our wills are melted into the will of God, this is no opposition to the quietness which God requires in a contented spirit.

Quest. But then, *what is this quietness of spirit opposed unto?*

Ans. *To murmuring, and repining at the hand of God; as the discontented Israelites often did*, which if we our selves cannot endure, either in our children or servants, much less can God bear it in us.

2. *To vexing and fretting*; which is a degree beyond murmuring. It is a speech I remember of an Heathen, A wise man may grieve under, but not be vexed with his afflictions. There is a vast difference betwixt a kindly grieving, and a distempered vexation.

3. *To tumultuousness of spirit*: When the thoughts run distractingly and work in a confused manner, so that the affections are like the unruly multitude in the *Acts*, who knew not for what end they were come together. The Lord expects that you should be silent under his rod, and as he said in *Acts*, 19. 36. *You ought to be quiet and to do nothing rashly.*

4. *To unsettledness and unfixedness of spirit, whereby the heart is taken off from the present duty that God requires in our several relations, both towards God, our selves, and others.* We should prize duty at a higher rate than to be taken off by every trivial occasion; a Christian indeed values every service of God so much, that though some may be in the eye of the world, and of natural reason a slight empty business, beggerly rudiments, foolishness, yet seeing God calls for it, the Authority of the command doth so over-awe his heart, that he is willing to spend himself, and to be spent in the discharge of. It is an expression of *Luthers*, Ordinary works that are done in faith, and from faith, are more precious than Heaven and Earth. And if this be so, and a Christian know it, it is not a little matter that should divert him: but he should answer every avocation, and resist every tentation, as *Nehemiah* did, Chap. 6. 3. *Sanballat*, *Geshem*, and *Tobiah*, (when they would have hindred the building of the wall) with this, *I am doing a great work* (saith he) *so that I cannot come down, why should the work of the Lord cease?*

5. *To distracting, heart-eating cares and fears.* A gracious heart so estimates its union with Christ, and the work that God sets it about, as it will not willingly suffer any thing to come in to choak it, or dead it. A Christian is desirous that the Word of God should take such full possession as to, divide between soul and spirit, but he would not suffer the fear and noise of evil tidings to take such impression in his soul, as to make a division and strugling there, like the twins in *Rebeckah's* womb. A great man will permit common people to stand without his doors, but he will not let them come in and make a noise in his Closet, or Bed-chamber, when he purposely retires himself from all worldly imployments. So a well tempered spirit, though it may enquire after things abroad, without doors in the world, and suffer some ordinary cares and fears to break in to the suburbs of the soul, so as to have a light touch upon the thoughts: Yet it will not upon any terms admit of an intrusion into the Privy-Chamber, which should be wholly reserved for Jesus Christ as his inward Temple.

6. *To sinking discouragements.* When things fall not out according to expectation, when the tyde of second causes runs so low, that we see little left in the outward means to bear up our hopes and hearts. That then the heart begins to reason, as he in the *Kings*, *If the Lord should open the windows of Heaven how should this be?* Never considering that God can open the eyes of the blind with clay and spittle, he can work above, beyond, nay, contrary to means; he often makes the fairest flowers of mans endeavours to wither, and brings improbable things to pass, that the glory of enterprises may be given to himself. Nay if his people stand in need of miracles to work their deliverance, miracles falls as easily out of Gods hands, as to give his people daily bread. Gods blessing is many times secret upon his servants that they know not

which way it comes; as 2 *Kings*, 3. 17. *Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain, yet the valley shall be filled with water.* God would have us depend on him, though we do not see means how the thing should be brought to pass, else we do not shew a quiet spirit; though an affliction be upon thee, let not thy heart sink under it: So far as thy heart sinks, and thou art discouraged under thy affliction, so much thou wantest of this lesson of Contentment.

7. *To sinfull shiftings and shirkings out for ease and help.* As we see in *Saul* running to the Witch of *Endor*, and his offering sacrifice before *Samuel* came: Nay, the good King *Jehoshaphat* joyns himself with *Ahaziah*, 2 *Chron.* 20. *ult.* *And* Asa *goes to* Benhadad *King of Assyria for help, not relying upon the Lord*, (2 *Chron.* 16. 7, 8.) Though the Lord had delivered the Ethiopian Army into his hands, consisting of a thousand thousand, 2 *Chron.* 14. 11. And good *Jacob* joyned in a lye with his mother to *Isaac*, he was not content to stay Gods time, and use Gods means, but made too great hast, and stept out of his way, to procure the blessing which God intended for him: as many do through the corruption of their hearts, & weakness of their faith, because they are not able to trust God, and follow him fully in all things and all waies; and for this cause the Lord often follows the Saints with many sore temporal crosses, (as we see in *Jacob*) though they obtain the Mercie. It may be thy wretched carnal heart thinks, I care not how I be delivered, so I may but get free from it; Is it not so many times in some of your hearts, when any cross or affliction befalls you? Have not you such kind of workings of spirit as this; Oh that I could but be delivered out of this affliction any way, I would not care? your hearts are far from being quiet. And this sinfull shifting is the next thing in opposition to this quietness, which God requires in a contented spirit.

The eighth and last thing that this quietness of spirit is opposite to, is, *Desperate risings of heart against God in a way of rebellion:* That is most abominable. I hope many of you have learned so far to be content, as to keep down your hearts from such distempers; and yet the truth is, not onely wicked men, but sometimes the very Saints of God find the beginnings of this, when an affliction lies long, and is very sore and heavy upon them indeed, and strikes them, as it were in the master-vein; they find somewhat of this in their hearts arising against God, their thoughts begin to bubble, and their affections begin to stir in rising against God himself; especially such, as together with their corruptions have much melancholly, and the Devil working both upon the corruptions of their hearts, and the melancholy distemper of their bodies; though there may lie much grace at the bottom, yet there may be some rising against God himself under affliction. Now Christian quietness is opposite in all these things: that is, When afflictions come, be it what affliction it will be, yet you do not murmur, though you be sensible, though you make your moan, though you desire to be delivered, & seek it by all good means, yet you do not murmur, nor repine, you do not fret, nor vex, there is not that tumultuousness of spirit in you, there is not unsetledness in your spirits, there are not distracting fears in your hearts, no sinking discouragements, no base shiftings, no rising in rebellion any way against God: This is the quietness of spirit under an affliction. And that's the second thing, when the soul is so far able to bear an affliction as to keep quiet under it.

Now

Now the Third thing I would open in the description is this, *It is an inward, quiet, gracious* [*frame*] *of Spirit.*. It is a frame of Spirit, and then a gracious frame of Spirit. Contentment it is a Soul-business, First it is inward; Secondly quiet; Thirdly it is a quiet *Frame* of Spirit. [*Frame,*] by that I mean these three things: There are three things considerable when I say, Contentment consists in the quiet *frame* of the Spirit of a man.

First, *That is a Grace, that spreads it self through the whole Soul:* as thus, It is in the judgement, that is, The Judgement of the soul of a man or woman tends to quiet the heart: In my judgement I am satisfied, that is one thing to be satisfied in ones understanding and judgement; as thus, This is the hand of God; and this is that which is suitable to my condition, or best for me; although I do not see the reason of the thing, yet I am satisfied in my judgement about it.

And then, *It is in the thoughts of a man or woman:* As my judgement is satisfied, so my thoughts are kept in order.

And then it comes to the *Will, My will yields and submits to it, my affections are all likewise kept in order, so that it goes through the whole Soul.* There is in some a partial Contentment, and so it is not the frame of the soul, but some part of the soul hath some Contentment; as thus, Many a man may be satisfied in his judgement about a thing, and yet cannot for his life rule his affections, nor his thoughts; cannot rule his thoughts, nor the will, nor the affections, though the judgement be satisfied: I make no question but many of you may know this by your own experience, if you do but observe the workings of your own hearts. Cannot you say, when such an affliction befalls you, I can bless God I am satisfied in my judgement about it, I have nothing in the world in respect of my judgement against it, I see the hand of God, and I should be content: yea I am satisfied in my judgement, that my condition is a good condition in which I am; but I cannot for my life rule my thoughts, and will, and my affections; me thinks I feel my heart heavie, and sad, and troubled more than it should be, and yet my judgement is satisfied. This seem'd to *David*, Psalm 43. *O my soul why art thou disquieted? David*, as far as his judgement went, there was a contentedness; that is, His judgement was satisfied in the Work of God upon him; and he was troubled, but he knew not wherefore. *O my soul why art thou cast down within me?* That Psalm is a very good Psalm for those that feel a fretting, discontented distemper in their hearts at any time, for them to be reading or singing: he hath it once or twice in that Psalm, *why art thou cast down O my soul?* In verse 5. *And why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, for the help of his countenance. David* had enough to quiet him, and that that he had, had prevailed with his judgement, but after it had prevailed with his judgement, he could not get it further. He could not get this grace of Contentment to go through the whole frame of the soul. There is a great deal of stir sometimes to get Contentment into their judgements; that is, To satisfie their judgement about their Condition: Come to many, that the hand of God is upon, perhaps in a grievous manner, and seek to satisfie them, and tell them that there is no such cause to be disquieted, O not such cause! saith the troubled spirit; O then there is no cause that any should be disquieted,

there was never any such affliction as I have! and a hundred things they have to put off what is said to them, so as you cannot somuch as get into their judgements to satisfie them; but there is a great deal of hope of Contentment, if once your judgements come to be satisfied, that you can sit down and say in your judgements, I see cause to be contented; but though you have gotten thus far, yet you may have much to do with your hearts afterward; for there is such unrulines in our thoughts and affections, that our judgements are not able alwaies to rule our thoughts and affections, and that makes me to say, That Contentment is an inward quiet, gracious frame of spirit, that is, the whole soul, Judgement, Thoughts, Will, Affections, and all are satisfied and quiet. I suppose in the very opening this, you begin to see it is a lesson that you had need learn, and it is not a thing soon got, if Contentment be such a thing as this is.

The Second thing is this, which is very observable, *That spiritual Contentment comes from the frame of the soul.* A man or woman that is contented in a right way, their Contentment doth not so much come from outward arguments, or any outward thing which helps them to be content, as it doth from the disposition of their own hearts; It is the disposition of their own hearts that causes this Contentment, that brings forth this gracious Contentment, rather than any external thing that doth it; as thus I would open my self, one that is disquieted, suppose a child, or man, or woman, if you come and bring them some great matter to please them, that perhaps will quiet them, and they will be contented, it is the thing you bring them that quiets them, but it is not the disposition of their own spirits, not from any good temper that there is in their own hearts, but from some external thing that is brought them: but when a Christian is contented in a right way, the quiet doth come more from the inward temper and disposition of their own hearts, than from any external arguments, or possession of any thing in the world. I would yet open this further to you in this Similitude. The being content upon some external thing, it is like the warming of a mans cloathes by the fire; but being content by the inward disposition of the soul, it is like the warmth that a mans cloathes hath from the natural heat of his body: A man that is a healthfull body, he puts on his clothes, and perhaps when he puts them on at the first in a cold morning, he feels his clothes cold, but after he hath them on a little while, they are warm; Why how came they warm? they came not nigh the fire: No, but it came from the natural heat of his body. Now a sickly man that hath his natural heat decayed, if he put on his clothes cold, they will not be hot in a long time, but he must have them warmed by the fire, and then they will quickly be cold again; So this will difference the Contentments of men. There are some men now that are very gracious, and when an affection comes upon them, indeed at first it seems to be a little cold, but after it hath been on a while, the very temper of their hearts, being gracious, it makes their afflictions easie, and makes them to be quiet under it, and not to complain of any discontentment. But now you shall have others that have an affliction upon them, that have not this good temper in their heart, their afflictions are very cold upon them and grievous; and it may be, if you bring them some external

ternal arguments, somewhat from without, as the fire that warms the clothes, perhaps they will be quiet for a while: but alas, wanting a gracious disposition within in their own hearts, that warmth will not hold long. The warmth of the fire, that is, a Contentment that comes meerly from external arguments will not hold long, but that holds that doth come from the gracious temper of the spirit. It is from the frame and the disposition of the spirit of a man or woman, there's the true Contentment. But this we shall speak to further in the opening of the *Mistery of Contentment*.

The third thing is this, *It is the frame of spirit, that shews the habitualness of this Grace of Contentment.* Contentment is not meerly one act, a flash in a good mood; you shall have many men and women, that take them in some good mood, and they will be very quiet; but this will not hold, this is not in a constant way, there is not a constant tenour of their spirits to be holy and gracious under affliction: But I say, It is the quiet frame of spirit, by that I mean, The habitual disposition of their souls, that it is not onely at this time, and the other time when you take men and women in a good mood, but it is the constant tenour and temper of the heart; that is a Christian that hath learned this lesson of Contentment, that in the constant tenour and temper of heart is contented, and can carry its self quietly in a constant way, or else it is worth nothing; for there is no body that is so furious in their discontent, but will be quiet in some good mood or other. Now first it is a heart-business; Secondly, it is the heart-quiet, and then thirdly, it is the frame of the heart.

But fourthly, *It is the [gracious] frame of the heart.* Indeed in contentment there is a composition of all graces, if the Contentment be Spiritual, if it be truly Christian, there is (I say) a composition of all Spiritual Graces; As it is in some Oyls, there is a composition of a great many very precious ingredients: so in this grace of Contentment, which we shall yet further speak of in the opening of the excellency of it. But now the gracious frame of spirit is in opposition to three things;

First, *In opposition to the natural stilness that there is in many men and women.* There is some of such a natural constitution, that makes them to be more still and more quiet than others: others are of a violent and hot constitution, and they are more impatient than others.

Secondly, *In opposition to a sturdy resolution.* As some men through the strength of some sturdy resolution, they have not seemed to be troubled let come what will come; and so it may be that through a sturdy resolution at some times, they are not so much disquieted as others are.

Thirdly, *In way of distinction, from the very strength of reason* (though not satisfied) *the strength of natural reason may quiet the heart in some measure.* But now I say, a gracious frame of spirit is not a meer stilness of body through a natural constitution and temper, nor sturdiness of resolution, nor meerly through the strength of reason,

You will say, Wherein is this graciousness of Contentment distinguisht from all these? More of this will be spoken to when we shew the Mysterie of it, and the lessons that are learned, but now we may speak a little by way of distinction

ction here, as now, from the natural ſtilneſs of mens ſpirits. Many men and women have ſuch a natural ſtilneſs of ſpirit, and conſtitution of bodie, that you ſhall find them ſeldom disquieted. But now mark theſe kind of people that are ſo, they likewiſe are very dull, of a very dull ſpirit in any good thing, they have no quickneſs, nor livelineſs of ſpirit in that which is good; but now mark, where contentment of heart is gracious, the heart is very quick and lively in the ſervice of God, yea, the more any gracious heart can bring its ſelf to be in a contented diſpoſition, the more fit it is for any ſervice of God, and is very active and lively in Gods ſervice, not dull in the ſervice of God: And as a contented heart is very active and ſtirring in the work of God, ſo he is very active and ſtirring in ſanctifying Gods name in the affliction that doth befall him: The difference will appear very clear thus, One that is of a ſtill diſpoſition, he is not diſquieted indeed as others, neither hath he any activeneſs of ſpirit in ſanctifying the name of God in the affliction; but now one that is content in a gracious way, as he is not disquieted, but keeps his heart quiet in reſpect of vexing and trouble; ſo on the other ſide he is nor dull nor heavie, but is very active to ſanctifie Gods Name in the affliction that is upon him; for it is not enough meerly not to murmur, nor to be diſcontended and troubled, but you muſt be active in the ſanctifying Gods name in the affliction. And indeed this will diſtinguiſh it from the other, from a ſturdie reſolution, I will not be troubled: but though you have a ſturdie reſolution, that you will not be troubled, Is there a conſcionableneſs in you to ſanctifie Gods Name in your affliction? and doth it come from thence? That's the main thing that brings the quiet of heart, and helps againſt the discontendedneſs in a gracious heart. I ſay, the deſire and care that thy ſoul hath to ſanctifie Gods name in an affliction, it is that that quiets the ſoul, which doth not in the other. Neither when it is meerly from Reaſon: As *Socrates*, it is ſaid of him, (though he were but an Heathen) that what ever befel him, he would never ſo much as change his countenance; and he got this power over his ſpirit, meerly by ſtrength of Reaſon and Morallitie: but now this gracious Contentment comes from principles beyond the ſtrength of Reaſon. I cannot open that, (from whence it comes) till we come to open the Myſterie of Spiritual Contentment. I will onely give you this one Note of difference between a man and a woman that is contented in a Natural way, and another, that is contented in a Spiritual way. Thoſe that are contented in a Natural way, they overcome themſelves, when outward afflictions doth befall them, they are contented, yea, and they are contented as well when they commit ſin againſt God, either when they have outward croſſes, or when God is dishonoured, it is all one; either when themſelves are croſt, or when [illegible] croſt: but now a gracious heart that is contented with its own afflict[illegible] mightily riſes when God is dishonoured.

The Fifth is, *FREELY ſubmitting to, and taking complacencie in Gods diſpoſe*; it is a *free* work of the ſpirit.

Now there are Four things to be opened in this *Freedom of ſpirit.*

Firſt, *That the heart is readily brought over.* That which one doth freely, there is no great ſtir to bring them to it. There are many men and women, when

when their afflictiõs are grievous upon them, with much ado they are brought to be contented, a great deal of ſtir their is to quiet their hearts when they are under affliction, yet at laſt perhaps they are brought to it: I, but now this doth not come off freely: If I deſire a thing of another, and I get it (perhaps) with much ado, and a great deal of ſtir there is, but here's no freedom of ſpirit; but when a man is free in a thing, do but mention it, and preſently he comes off to it. So if you have learned this art of Contentment, you will not onely be contented, after a great deal of do to quiet your hearts, but readily, as ſoon as ever you do come to think that it is the hand of God, your heart preſently cloſeth.

Secondly, *Freely*, that is, *not by conſtraint*; not patience by force (as we uſe to ſay.) As many will ſay, That you muſt be content, this is the hand of God, and there is no help for it; O this is too low an expreſſion for Chriſtians, yet when Chriſtians come to viſit one another, they ſay, Friend, or Neighbour, you muſt be content, this is *too* low an expreſſion for a Chriſtian. *Muſt be content*; no, readily and freely I will be content. It is ſuitable to my heart to yield to God, and to be content, I find it is a thing that comes off of it ſelf, that my ſoul will be content. Oh! you ſhould anſwer your friends ſo that come and tell you, you muſt be content, Nay I am willing to yield to God, and I am freely content, that's the ſecond. And then a free act it comes after a rational way, that's freedoom; that is, it doth not come through ignorance, becauſe I know no better condition, or that I know not what affliction is, I but it comes through a ſanctified judgement, for that is the reaſon that no creature can do an act of freedom, but the rational creature, the libertie of action is onely in rational creatures, and it comes from hence, for that's onely freedom, and out of libertie that's wrought in a rational way; as a rational freedom is, when I by my judgement ſee what is to be done, underſtand the thing, and then there is a cloſing with what I underſtand in my judgement, that is freely done; but now if a man doth any thing, and underſtands not what he doth, he cannot be ſaid to do it freely. So if men are contented, but it is becauſe they underſtand not what their affliction is, or becauſe they underſtand no better, this is not freely: as for inſtance, Suppoſe a Child born in a priſon and never in all his life went out, the Child is contented, why? Becauſe he never knew better, but this is no free act of Contentation. But now for men and women that do know better, that know that the condition in which they are in, it is an afflicted condition, and a ſad condition, and yet they can bring their hearts to a Contentation out of a ſanctified judgement, this is freedom.

Thirdly, *This freedom it is in oppoſition to ſtupidneſs*, for a man and woman [illegible] content meerly out of want of ſence, this is not free, as a man in a dead [illegible] that doth not feel you nip his fleſh, he is not freely patient; but if one [illegible] have their fleſh nipt, and feel it, and yet for all that can be able to [illegible] himſelf, and do it freely, that is another matter. So it is here, many are contented meerly out of ſtupidneſs, they have a dead palſie upon them; but now a gracious heart, hath ſence enough, & yet is contented, & therefore is free

Sixthly, *Freely* [*ſubmitting*] *to, and taking complacencie in Gods diſpoſe*. Submitting to Gods diſpoſe, What's that? The word *Submit*, it ſignifies nothing elſe, but to ſend under; as thus, One that is diſcontented, the heart will be unruly, and would even get above God, ſo far as diſcontentment prevails,

but

but now comes the grace of Contentment and sends it under; to submit, it is to send under a thing; now when the soul comes to see the unrulines that there is in it; here's the hand of God that brings an affliction, and my heart is troubled and discontented; what saith the soul? Wilt thou be above God? Is it not Gods hand, and must thy will be regarded more than Gods? O under, under, O thou soul get under, keep under, keep low, keep under Gods feet; thou art under Gods feet, and keep under his feet, keep under the Authority of God, the Majesty of God, the Sovereignity of God, the Power that God hath over thee: Keep under, that is to submit; then the soul can submit to God when it can send its self under the Power and Authority, and Sovereignity, and Dominion that God hath over it; that is the sixth particular: Yea, but that is not enough, yet you have not got to this Grace of Contentment, except in the next place you take.

Seventhly, *Taking a* [*complacency*] *in Gods disposc.* That is thus, I am well pleased in what God doth, so far as I can see God in it, though as I said, I may be sensible of the affliction, and may desire that God in his due time would take it off, and use means to take it off; yet I may be well pleased so far as Gods hand is in it. To be well pleased with Gods hand, that is a higher degree than the other: and this comes from hence, not onely because I see that I should be content in this affliction, but because I see that there is good in this affliction. I find there is honey in this rock, and so I do not onely say *I must*, or *I will* submit to Gods hand: no, but the hand of God is *good*; it is *good that I am afflicted.* That it is just that I am afflicted, that may be in one that is not truly contented; I may be convinced that God deals justly in this, God is righteous and just, and 'tis fit I should submit to what he hath done, O the Lord hath done righteously in all his waies: but that is not enough, but thou must say, Good is the Hand of the Lord, the expression of old *Eli*, *Good is the Word of the Lord*, when it was a sore and hard word, that word that did threaten very grievous things to *Eli* and his house, and yet, Good is the Word of the Lord, saith *Eli*. Perhaps some of you may say as *David*, It is good that I was afflicted; nay, you must come to say thus, *It is good that I am afflicted.* Not good when you see the good fruit that it hath wrought, but when you are afflicted to say, It is good that I am afflicted. Whatever the affliction be, yet through the mercy of God my condition is a good condition; it is the top indeed, and the height of this art of Contentment to come to this pitch, to be able to say, Well, my condition and afflictions are thus and thus, and is very grievous and sore, yet I am through Gods mercy in a good condition, and the hand of God is good upon me notwithstanding. Now I should have given divers Scriptures about this, I shall but give you one or two that are remarkable; you will think this is a hard lesson to come thus far, not onely to be quiet, but to have complacency in affliction. *Prov.* 15. 6. *In the house of the righteous is much treasure, but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.* Here's a Scripture now that will shew, that a gracious heart hath cause to say, it is in a good condition what ever it be. In the house of the Righteous is much Treasure, his house, what house? it may be a poor Cottage, perhaps he hath scarce a stool to sit on; perhaps he is fain to sit upon a

stump

ſtump of wood, a piece of a block, inſtead of a ſtool; or perhaps he hath ſcarce a bed to lie upon, or a diſh to eat in; yet ſaith the holy Ghoſt, In the houſe of the righteous is much treaſure: Let the righteous man be the pooreſt man in the world: It may be there are ſome that have come and taken all the goods out of his houſe for debt; perhaps his houſe is plundered, and all is gone, yet ſtill, *In the houſe of the righteous is much treaſure*; the righteous man can never be brought to be ſo poor, to have his houſe rifled and ſpoiled, but there will remain much treaſure within, if he hath but a diſh or a ſpoon, or any thing in the world in his houſe, there will be much treaſure; ſo long as he is there, there is the preſence of God upon, and the bleſſing of God upon him, and therein is much treaſure; but in the revenues of the wicked there is trouble: There is more treaſure in the pooreſt bodies houſe, if he be godly, than in the houſe of the greateſt man in the World, that hath his brave hangings, and brave wrought beds, and chairs, and couches, and cup-boards of plate, and the like; what ever he hath, he hath not ſo much treaſure in it, as in the houſe of the pooreſt righteous ſoul; therefore in a verſe or two after my Text, no marvel though *Paul* ſaith he was content, you ſhall ſee in *Phil.* 4. 18. *But I have all, and abound, I am full.* I have all: Alas poor man, what had *Paul* that could make him ſay he had all? where was there ever man more afflicted than *Paul* was? many times he had not tatters to hang about his bodie, to cover his nakedneſs, he had not bread to eat, he was often in nakedneſs, and put in the ſtocks, and whipt, and cruelly uſed, *yet I have all* (ſaith *Paul*) for all that. Yea you ſhall have it in 2. *Cor.* 6. 10. he profeſſes there, *That he did poſſeſs all things, as ſorrowfull, yet always rejoycing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet poſſeſſing all things*: but mark what he ſaith, it is, *As having nothing*, but it is, *Poſſeſſing all things.* He doth not ſay, as poſſeſſing all things, but poſſeſſing all things; it is very little I have in the world, but yet poſſeſſing all things: So that you ſee, a Chriſtian hath cauſe to take complacencie in Gods hand, whatſoever his hand be.

The eighth thing in Contentment it is [*in Gods diſpoſe*] *Submitting to, and taking complacencie in Gods diſpoſe.* That is, the ſoul that hath learned this leſſon of Contentment, looks up to God in all things; looks not down to the inſtruments or the means, as ſuch a man did it, and it was unreaſonableneſs of ſuch and ſuch inſtruments, and the like barbarous uſage of ſuch and ſuch; but looks up to God; a contented heart looks to Gods diſpoſe, and ſubmits to Gods diſpoſe, that is, ſees the wiſdom of God in all, in his ſubmiſſion ſees his ſovereigntie, but that that makes him take complacencie, it is Gods wiſdom; the Lord knows how to order things better than I, the Lord ſees further than I do, I ſee things but at preſent, but the Lord ſees a great while hence, and how do I know, but had it not been for this affliction, I had been undone? I know that the love of God *may as well ſtand with an afflicted eſtate, as with a proſperous eſtate*; and ſuch kind of reaſonings there are in a contented ſpirit, ſubmiting unto the diſpoſe of God.

The laſt thing is, *This is in* [*every condition.*] It may be in ſome things you could be content: you ſhall have many will ſay, If my affliction were but as the affliction of ſuch an one, I could be content; yea but it muſt be in the preſent

preſent affliction that is upon you. We uſe to ſay, There is a great deal of deceit in Univerſals; in the general, come to any man or woman, and ſay, Will not you be content with Gods diſpoſe? Yes, ſay they, God forbid but we ſhould ſubmit to Gods hand what ever it be; you ſay thus in the general, it is an eaſie matter to learn this leſſon, but when it comes to the particular, when the croſs comes ſore indeed, when it ſtrikes you in the heavieſt croſs that you think could befall you, what ſaith your heart now? Can you in every condition be content, not onely for the matter, but for the time, that is, to be in ſuch a condition ſo long as God would have you, to be content to be at Gods time in that condition, to have ſuch an affliction ſo long as God would have the affliction abide upon you, to be willing to ſtay, & not to come out of the affliction no ſooner, than the Lord would have you come out of it? you are not content in your condition elſe; to be content meerly that I have ſuch a hand of God upon me, and not to ſtay under the hand of God, that is, not to be content under every condition, but when I can find my heart ſubmitting to Gods diſpoſe in ſuch particular afflictions that are very hard, and very grievous, and yet my heart is quiet, here is one that hath learned the leſſon of Contentment: Contentment, it is the inward, quiet, gracious frame of ſpirit, freely ſubmitting to, and taking complacencie in Gods diſpoſe in every condition: That is deſcription. Now in this, there hath been Nine ſeveral things opened.

1. That Contentment is, A heart-work within the ſoul. 2. It is, The quieting of the heart. 3. It is, The frame of the ſpirit. 4. It is, A gracious frame. 5. It is the free working of this gracious frame. 6. There is in it, A ſubmiſſion to God, ſending the ſoul under God. 7. There is, A taking complacencie in the hand of God. 8. All to Gods diſpoſe. 9. In every condition, every condition though never ſo hard, though continue never ſo long. Now thoſe of you that have learned to be content, have learned to attain unto theſe ſeverall things; the very opening of theſe things, I hope may ſo far work upon your hearts, as, Firſt, That you may lay your hands upon your hearts upon this that hath been ſaid, the very telling of you what the Leſſon is, (I ſay) may cauſe you to lay your hands upon your hearts, and ſay, Lord, I ſee there is more in Chriſtian Contentation than I thought there was, and I have been far from learning this Leſſon, I indeed have learned but my A B C in this Leſſon of Contentment, I am but in the lower Form in Chriſts School if I am in it at all; but theſe we ſhall ſpeak to more afterward. But the ſpecial thing I aimed at in the opening of this point, is, To ſhew how great a Myſterie there is in *Chriſtian Contentment*; and how many ſeveral Leſſons are to be learned, that we may come to attain to this Heavenly diſpoſition that Saint *Paul* did attain to.

Sermon

Sermon II.

Stepney Aug. 3. 1645.

Philippians 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

WE have made enterance (you may remember) into the Argument of *Christian Contentment*. And have opened the words, and shewed you what this Christian Contentation is; that it is, The inward, quier, gracious frame of the Spirit, freely submitting to, and taking complacencie in Gods disposе in every condition. And therein came to this last thing, [*In every condition*] Now we shall a little enlarge that, and so proceed:

1. *First submitting to God in what ever Affliction befalls us, for the kind.*
2. *For the time and continuance of the Affliction.*
3. *For the varietie and changes of Affliction:* Let them be what they will, yet there must be a submitting to Gods disposе in every condition.

First for the kind, Many men and women will in the general say, that they must submit to God in affliction; I suppose now, if you should come from one end of this Congregation to another, and speak to every soul thus, Would not you submit to Gods disposе, in what ever condition he should disposе of you to? you would say, God forbid it should be otherwise, but we use to say, *There is a great deal of deceit in generals*. In general you would submit to any thing: but what if it be in this and that particular, that is most crosse to you? Then any thing but that: we are usually apt to think that any condition is better than the condition that God doth disposе us to, now here is not Contentment; it should not be onely to any condition in general, but for the kind of the affliction, if it be that which is most Crosse to you. God (it may be) strikes you in your Child, Oh! if it had been in my Estate, saith one, I should be content; perhaps he strikes you in your Match, Oh saith he, I had rather have been strucken in my health; and if he had struck you in your health, oh then if it had been in my trading I would not have cared; but we must not be our own carvers, what particular afflictions God shall disposе us to, there must be Contentment in them.

Secondly, *There must be a submission to God in every affliction, for the time and continuance of the affliction.* It may be, saith one, I could submit and be content, but this affliction hath been upon me a long time, a quarter of a year, a year, divers years, and I know not how to yield and submit to it, my patience is even worn and broke; yea, it may be it is a spiritual affliction; you could sub-

mit

mit to God, you say, in any outward affliction, but not in a soul-affliction, or if it were an affliction upon the soul, trouble upon the heart, if it were the with-drawing of Gods face, yet if this had been but for a little time, I could submit; but seeking of God so long a time, and yet God doth not appear, Oh how shall I bear this! We must not be our own disposers for the *time* of deliverance, no more than the *kind* and *way* of deliverance; and I will give you a Scripture or two about this; That we are to submit unto God for the time, as well as the kind, in the latter end of the 1. Chap. of *Ezek. when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake*, (the Prophet was cast down upon his face, but how long must he lie upon his face?) *And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee, and the Spirit entered into me, when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet.* Ezekiel was cast down upon his face, and there he must lie til God bid him stand up, yea, and not onely so, but till Gods Spirit came into him to enable him to stand up: So when God casts us down, we must be content to lie till God bid us stand up, and Gods Spirit enter into us to enable us to stand up. So you know *Noah*, he was put into the Ark, certainly he knew there was much affliction in the Ark, having all kind of creatures shut up with him for twelve moneths together, it was a mightie thing, yet God shutting him up (though the waters were asswaged) *Noah* was not to come out of the Ark till God bade him. So though we be shut up in great afflictions, and we may think there may be this and that, and the other means to come out of that affliction, yet till God doth open the door, we should be willing to stay; God hath put us in, and God is to bring us out: As we read in the *Acts*, of *Paul*, when they had shut him in prison, and would have sent for him out; Nay, saith *Paul*, they shut us in, let them come and fetch us out. So in a holy gracious way should a soul say, Well, this affliction that I am brought into, it is by the hand of God, and I am content to be here till God brings me out himself. God doth require at our hands, that we should not be willing to come out till he comes and fetches us out. In *Josh.* 4. 10. you have a notable historie there that may very well serve our purpose; we read of the Priests, that the Priests bare the Ark, and stood in the midst of *Jordan*; you know when the children of *Israel* went into the Land of *Canaan*, they went through the River of *Jordan*: Now the going through the River *Jordan* was a very dangerous thing, onely God bade them to go, they might have been afraid that the water might have come in upon them: but mark, it is said, *The Priests that bare the Ark, stood in the midst of* Jordan, *till every thing was finished that the Lord commanded* Joshua *to speak unto the people, according to all that* Moses *commanded* Joshua, *and the people hasted and passed over: And it came to pass when all the people were clean passed over, that the Ark of the Lord passed over, and the Priests in the presence of the people.* Now it was Gods dispose, that all the people should pass over first, that they should be safe upon the Land; but the Priests, they must stand still till all the people be passed over, and then they must have leave to go, but they must stay till God would have them go, stay in all that danger; for certainly, in reason and sence, there was a great deal of danger in staying: for the Text saith, *the people hasted over*, but the Priests, they must stay till the people

ple be gone, stay till God calls them out from that place of danger. And so many times it doth prove, that God is pleased to dispose of things, so that the Minister must stay longer in danger, than the People, and Magistrates and those in publick place, which should make people to be satisfied and contented with a lower condition that God hath put them into; Though your condition be low, yet you are not in that danger that those are in, that are in a higher condition; God calls them in publick place to stand longer in the gap and place of danger than other people: but we must be content to stay even in *Jordan*, till the Lord shall be pleased to call us out.

And then for the varietie of our condition, we must be content with the particular affliction, and the time, and all the circumstances about the affliction; for sometimes the circumstances are greater afflictions than the affliction themselves: And for the varietie, if God will exercise us with various afflictions one after another; As that hath been very observable even of late, that many, that have been plundered and come away, afterwards have fallen sick and died: They have fled for their lives, and afterwards the plague hath come among them, & if not that affliction, it may be some other affliction, it is very rare that one affliction comes alone, cõmonly afflictions are not single things, but they come one upon the neck of another; it may be God strikes one in his estate, then in his bodie, then in his name, wife, or child, or dear friend, and so it comes in a various way: it is the way of God ordinarily (you may find it by experience) that seldom one affliction comes alone, now this is hard when one affliction follows after another, when there is a varietie of afflictions, when there is a mightie change in a condition, up and down, this way, and that way; there indeed is the trial of a Christian; there must be submission to Gods dispose in them. I remember it is said even of *Cato* that was a Heathen, that no man saw him to be changed, though he lived in a time when the Common-wealth was so often changed, yet it is said of him, he was the same still, though his condition was changed; and he ran through varietie of conditions. Oh that it could be said so of many Christians, that though their conditions be changed, yet that no bodie could see *them* changed, they are the same: Look what gracious, sweet, & holy temper they were in before, that they are in still: thus we are to submit to the dispose of God in every conditiõ.

Object. But you will say, This that you speak of is good indeed, if we could attain to it, but is it possible for one to attain to this?

Answer. It is, if you get skill in the Art of it, you may attain to it, and it will prove to be no such difficult thing to you neither, if you understand but the mysterie of it; as there's many things that men do in their callings, that if a Countrey-man comes and sees, he thinks it a mightie hard thing, and that he should never be able to do it, but that's because he understands not the art of it, there is a turning of the hand, so as you may do it with ease. Now that's the business of this exercise, to open unto you the Art and Mysterie of Contentment: What way a Christian comes to Contentment, there is a great Mysterie and Art in it, by that hath been opened to you there will appear some Mysterie and Art, as that a man should be content with his affliction, and yet throughly sensible of his affliction too, to be throughly sensible of an af-

fliction, and to endeavour the removing of it by all lawfull means, and yet to be content, there's a Myſterie in that, how to joyn theſe two together, to be ſenſible of an affliction as much as that man or woman that is not conent: I am ſenſible of it as fully as they, and I ſeek waies to be delivered from it as well as they, and yet ſtill my heart abides content, this is I ſay a Myſterie that is very hard to be underſtood by a carnal heart, but grace doth teach ſuch a mixture, doth teach us how to make a mixture of ſorrow, and a mixture of joy together, and that makes Contentment, the mingling of joy and ſorrow, of gracious joy and gracious ſorrow together, grace teaches us how to moderate and to order an affliction, ſo as there ſhall be a ſence of it, and yet for all that Contentment under it.

There are divers things further for the opening of the Myſterie of Contentment.

The firſt thing therefore is this, *To ſhew, that there is a great Myſterie in it.* One that is Contented in a Chriſtian way, it may be ſaid of him, that he is the moſt *contented* man in the world, and the moſt *unſatisfied* man in the world, theſe two together muſt needs be myſterious, I ſay a contented man, as he is the moſt cõtented, ſo he is the moſt unſatisfied of any man in the world. You never learned the myſterie of Contentment, except it may be ſaid of you, that as you are the moſt contented man, ſo you are the moſt unſatisfied man in the world.

You will ſay, *How is that?* A man that hath learned the art of Contentment, is the moſt contented with any low condition that he hath in the world, yet he cannot be ſatisfied with the enjoyment of all the world, and yet he is contented if he hath but a cruſt, but bread and water; that is, If God diſpoſes of him for the things of the world, to have but bread and water for his preſent condition, he can be ſatisfied with Gods diſpoſe in that, yet if God ſhould give to him Kingdoms, and Empires, all the World to Rule, if he ſhould give it him for his Portion, he would not be ſatisfied with that: here's the myſtery of it, though his heart be ſo enlarged as the enjoyment of all the world, and ten thouſand worlds cannot ſatisfie him for his Portion, yet he hath a heart quieted under Gods diſpoſe, if he gives him but bread & water: to joyn theſe two together, this muſt needs be a great art and myſterie. Though he be contented with God in a little, yet thoſe things that would content other men, will not content him: The men of the world they ſeek after eſtates, and think if they had thus much, and thus much, they would be content, they aim at no great matters; but if I had (perhaps ſome man thinks) but two or three hundred a year, then I ſhould be well enough; if I had but five hundred a year, or a thouſand a year (ſaith another) then I ſhould be ſatisfied: but ſaith a gracious heart, if he had ten hundred thouſand times ſo much a year, it would not ſatisfie him; if he had the quinteſſence of all the exellencies of all the creatures in the World, it could not ſatisfie him; and yet this man can ſing, and be merry, and joyfull when he hath but a cruſt of bread, and a little water in the world. Surely Religion is a great myſterie, great is the myſterie of Godlineſs, not onely in the Doctrinal part of it, but in the Practical part of it alſo. Godlineſs teacheth us this myſterie, Not to be ſatisfied with all the world for our portion, and yet to be content with the meaneſt condition in which we are. As *Luther*, when he had great gifts ſent him from Dukes and Princes, he refuſed them,

them, and saith he, I did vehemently protest God should not put me off so, 'tis not that which will content me. A little in the world will content a Christian for his passage: Mark, here lies the Mysterie of it, A little in the world will content a Christian for his *Passage*, but all the world, and ten thousand times more, will not content a Christian for his *Portion*: now a Carnal heart will be content with these things of the world for his Portion; and there is the difference between a Carnal heart and a Gracious heart: But saith a Gracious heart, Lord, do with me what thou wilt for my passage through this world, I will be content with that, but I cannot be content with all the world for my Portion: so there's the Mysterie of true Contentation. A contented man, though he be most contented with the least things in the world, yet he is the most unsatisfied man that lives in the world. That Soul that is capable of God, can be filled with nothing else but God; nothing but God can fill a Soul that is capable of God: Though a gracious heart knows that it is capable of God, and was made for God: Carnal hearts think of no reference to God; but a Gracious heart, being enlarged to be capable of God, and enjoying somewhat of him, nothing in the world can fill a gracious heart, it must be onely God himself; and therefore you shall observe, That let God give what he will to a Gracious heart, a heart that is godly, except he gives Himself, it will not do: a godly heart will not onely have the Mercy, but the God of that Mercy as well its self; and then a little matter is enough in the world, so be it he hath the God of that Mercie he doth enjoy: in *Phil.* 4.7,9. I shall need go no further to shew a notable Scripture for this: Compare vers. 7. with vers. 9. *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.* The peace of God shall keep your hearts. Then in the 9 v. *Those things which ye have both learned, and received, & heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you; The peace of God shall keep you, and the God of peace shall be with you.* This is that that I would observe from this Text, That the peace of God is not enough to a Gracious heart, except it may have the God of that peace. A Carnal heart could be satisfied if he might but have outward peace, though it be not the peace of God; Peace in the State, and in his Trading would satisfie him: but mark how a Godly heart goes beyond a Carnal; all outward peace is not enough, but I must have the peace of God: But suppose you have the peace of God, Will not that quiet you? No, I must have the God of peace, as the peace of God, so the God of peace, that is I must enjoy that God that gives me the peace, I must have the Cause as well as the Effect; I must see from whence my peace comes, and enjoy the fountain of my peace, as well as the stream of my peace; and so in other mercies: Have I health from God? I must have the God of my health to be my Portion, or else I am not satisfied: It is not life, but the God of my life; it is not riches, but the God of those riches that I must have, the God of my preservation, as well as my preservation; a gracious heart is not satisfied without this, To have the God of the mercie, as well as the mercie. In *Psalm* 73. 25. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon the Earth that I desire besides thee.* It is nothing in Heaven or Earth, can satisfie me, but thy self; if God give thee not onely Earth but Heaven, that thou shouldest rule over Sun, Moon, and Srars,

This Point is largely treated on in a Sermon Psalm. 17. 14. *Entituled,* The misery of those men that have their *Portion* in this life.

and have the rule over the higheſt of the Sons of men, it would not be enough to ſatisfie thee, except thou hadſt God himſelf; There lies the firſt Myſterie of Contentment; and truly a contented man, though he be the moſt contented in the world, yet he is the moſt unſatisfied man in the world; that is, Thoſe things that will ſatisfie the world, will not ſatisfie him.

Secondly, There is this Myſterie in Chriſtian Contentation: *A Chriſtian comes to Contentment, not ſo much by way of Addition, as by way of Subſtraction*, that is his way of Contentment, and that is a way that the world hath no ſkill in. I open it thus, Not ſo much by the adding to what he would have, or to what he hath, not by adding more to his condition, but rather by ſubſtracting of his deſires, and ſo to make his deſires and condition to be even and equal. A carnal heart knows no way to be contented but this, I have ſuch and ſuch an eſtate, and if I had this added to it, and the other comfort added that now I have not, then I ſhould be contented; it may be I have loſt my eſtate, if I could have but that given to me ſo as to make up my loſs, then I ſhould be a contented man: But now contentment doth not come in that way, it comes not in (I ſay) by the adding to what thou wanteſt, but by the ſubſtracting of thy deſires; it is all one to a Chriſtian, either that I may get up unto what I would have, or get my deſires down to what I have; either that I may attain to what I do deſire, or bring down my deſires to what I have alreadie attained; my eſtate is the ſame, for it is as ſutable to me to bring my deſire down to my condition, as it is to raiſe up my condition to my deſire. Now I ſay, a heart that hath no grace, and is not inſtructed in this Myſterie of Contentment, knows no way to get Contentment, but to have his eſtate raiſed up to his deſires; but the other hath another way to Contentment, that is, He can bring his deſires down to his eſtate, and ſo he doth attain to his Contentment. So the Lord faſhions the hearts of the children of men: Now if the heart of a man be faſhioned to his condition, he may have as much Contentment, as if his condition be faſhioned to his heart; ſome men have a mightie large heart, but they have a ſtrait condition, and they can never have Contentment, when their hearts are big, and their condition is little; but now though a man cannot bring his condition to be as big as his heart, yet if he can bring his heart to be as little as his condition, to bring them even, from thence is Contentment. The world is infinitely deceived in this, To think that Contentment lies in having more than they have; here lies the bottom and root of all Contentment, when there is an evenneſs and proportion between our hearts and our conditions; and that is the reaſon that many, that are godly men that are in a low condition, live more ſweet and comfortable lives than thoſe that are richer: Contentment is not always cloathed with ſilk, and purple, and velvets, but Contentment is ſometimes in a ruſſet ſuit, in a mean condition as well as in a higher; and many men that ſometimes have had great eſtates, and God hath brought them into a lower condition, they have had more Contentment in that condition than the other: Now how can that poſſible be? Thus eaſily, For if you did but underſtand the root of Contentment, it conſiſts in the ſutableneſs and proportion of the ſpirit of a man to his eſtate, and the evenneſs, when one end is not longer and bigger than another, the heart is contented, there is

comfort

comfort in that condition; now let God give a man never so great riches, yet if the Lord gives him up to the pride of his heart, he will never be contended: But now, let God bring any one into a mean condition, and then let God but fashion and suit his heart to that condition, & he will be content. As now in a mans going, Suppose a man had a mighty long leg, and his other leg were short, although one of his legs be longer than ordinary, yet he could not go so well as a man that hath both his legs shorter than he. I compare a long leg, when one is longer than another, to a man that hath an high condition, and is very rich, and a great man in the world, but he hath a great proud heart too, and that is longer and larger than his condition; now this man cannot but be troubled in his condition: whereas another man that is in a mean condition is low, and his heart is low too, so that his heart and his condition is both even together, and this man goes on with more ease abundantly than the other doth: So that now a gracious heart works after this manner; The Lord hath been pleased to bring down my condition, now if the Lord bring down my heart, and make it even with my condition, then I am well enough: And so when God brings down his condition, he doth not so much labour to raise up his condition again, as to bring down his heart to his condition. The Heathens themselves they had a little glimps of this, they could say, That the best riches that is, it is *the poverty of desires*; that is a speech of a Heathen, (that is) If a man or woman have their desires cut short, and have no large desires, that man and woman they are rich, when they can bring their desires to be but low: So this is the art of Contentment; Not to seek to add to our conditions, but to substract from our desires. Another hath this: The way to be rich (saith he) it is not by increasing of wealth, but by diminishing of our desires; for certainly that man or woman is rich indeed, who hath their desires satisfied: Now a contented man hath his desires satisfied, God satisfies his desires; that is, all considered, he is satisfied in his condition for the present to be the best condition, and so he comes to this Contentment by way of Substraction, and not Addition.

The third thing in the Art of Contentment, is this, *A Christian comes to contentment, not so much by getting off his burden that is upon him, as by the adding another burden to him*; this is a way that flesh and bloud hath little skill in. You will say, How is this? In this manner, art thou afflicted, and is there a great load and burden upon thee by reason of thy affliction? thou thinkest there is no way in the world to get Contentment, but, Oh that this burden were off, Oh! it is a heavy load, and few know what a burden I have! What, doest thou think there is no way for the Contentment of thy spirit but this getting off thy burden? Oh thou art deceived, the way of Contentment is, to add another burden, that is, labour to load and burden thy heart with thy sin, and the heavier the burden of thy sin is to thy heart, the lighter will the burden of thy affliction be to thy soul, and so shalt thou come to be content: If thy burden were lightned, that would content thee; thou thinkest there is no way to lighten it but to get it off, but thou art deceived, for if thou canst get thy heart to be more burdened with thy sin, thou wilt be less burdened with thy afflictions. You will say, This is a strange way, for a man or woman to get

eaſe to their condition, when they are burdened, to lay a greater burden upon them: You think there is no other way when you are afflicted, but to be jolly and merry, and get into company, Oh no! you are deceived, your burden will come again; alas, this is a poor way to get his ſpirit quieted, poor man, the burden will be upon him again! but if thou wouldeſt have thy burden light, thou muſt get alone, and examine thy heart for thy ſin, and charge thy ſoul with thy ſin: if thy burden be thy eſtate, for the abuſe of it; or if it be a burden upon thy body, for the abuſe of health, the abuſe of any mercies that now the Lord hath taken away from thee, thou haſt not honoured God with thoſe mercies that thou haſt had, but thou haſt walked wantonly and careleſly: and ſo fall a bemoning thy ſin before the Lord, and thou ſhalt quickly find the burden of thy affliction to be lighter than it was before; do but trie this piece of ſkill and art, to get your ſouls contented with any low condition that God puts you into: Many times in a family, when any affliction befalls them, Oh what a deal of diſcontentment is there between man and wife, if croſt in their Eſtates at Land, or ill news from Sea, or thoſe that they truſted are broke, and the like, and perhaps ſomewhat in the family fals croſs between man and wife, or in reference to the children or ſervants, and there is nothing but brabling and diſcontents among them, now they many times are burdened with their own diſcontent, and perhaps will ſay one to another, This life is very uncomfortable, for us to live thus diſcontented ſo as we do; but have you ever tried this way, the husband and the wife? have you ever got alone and ſaid, Come, Oh let us go and humble our ſouls before God together, let us go into our chamber and humble our ſouls before God for our ſin, whereby we have abuſed thoſe mercies that God hath taken away from us, and we have provok'd God againſt us, Oh let us charge our ſelves with our ſin, and be humbled before the Lord together: have you tried ſuch a way as this is? Oh you would find the cloud would be taken a way, and the Sun would ſhine in upon you, and you would have a great deal more Contentment than ever yet you had: if a mans eſtate be broken either by plunderers, or any other way; now how ſhall this man have Contentment? how? By the breaking of his heart; God hath broken thy eſtate, Oh ſeek to him for the breaking of thy heart likewiſe; Indeed a broken eſtate, a whole heart, and a hard heart, will not joyn together, there will be no Contentment; but a broken eſtate, and a broken heart, will ſo ſute together, as there will be more Contentment than there was before, add therefore to the breaking of thy eſtate, the breaking of thy heart what thou canſt, and that is the way to be contented in a Chriſtian manner, which is the Third Myſterie in Chriſtian Contentation.

The fourth thing is this, *It is not ſo much the removing of the affliction that is upon us, as the changing of the affliction, the Metamorphoſing of the affliction, when it is quite turned and changed into another thing:* I mean in regard of the uſe of it, though for the matter the affliction abide ſtill. The way of Contentment to a carnal heart it's onely removing of the affliction, Oh that it may be gone; no but ſaith a gracious heart, God hath taught me a way for Contentment, though the affliction ſhall continue ſtill for the matter of it, for there

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is a virtue of grace to turn this affliction into good; it takes away but onely the ſting and poyſon of it: As now, Suppoſe povertie. A mans eſtate is loſt; well, is there no way to be contented till your eſtate be made up again? Till your poverty be removed? Yes, certainly Chriſtianitie would teach Contentment, though poverty continues, yet it will teach you how to turn your povertie into ſpiritual riches; that you ſhall be poor ſtill for your outward eſtate; but this ſhall be altered, whereas before it was once a natural evil to you, it comes now to be turned into a ſpiritual benefit to you; and ſo you come ro be content. It is a ſpeech of *Ambroſe*, Even *poverty it's ſelf it is riches unto holy men:* Godly men do make their povertie turn to be riches, they get more riches out of their povertie than ever they get out of their revenues, out of all their trading in this world, they never had ſuch incomes as they have had out of their povertie; This a carnal heart will think ſtrange, that a man ſhall make povertie to be the moſt gainfull trade that ever he had in the world; I am perſwaded that many Chriſtians have found it ſo, that they have got more good by their povertie than ever they got by all their riches: you find it in Scripture, therefore think not this ſtrange that I am ſpeaking of, you do not find any one Godly man that came out of an affliction worſe than when he came into it, though for a while he was ſhaken, yet at laſt he was better for an affliction; but a great many godly men you find have been worſe for their proſperitie, ſcarce one Godlie man that you read in Scripture of but was worſe for proſperitie (except *Daniel* and *Nehemiah*, I do not read of any hurt they got by their proſperitie that they had) ſcarce (I think) *is* any one example of any godly man but was rather worſe for his proſperitie than better, ſo that you ſee it's no ſuch ſtrange thing, neither to one that is gracious that they ſhall get good by their affliction: *Luther* hath ſuch an expreſſion in his Comment upon the 5. Chap. of the *Galatians*, in the 17 verſe, in his Comment upon that place ſaith, *A Chriſtian becometh a mighty Worker, and a wonderfull Creator*, that is (ſaith he) to create out of heavineſs, joy; out of terror, comfort; out of ſin, righteouſneſs; out of death, life; and brings light out of darkneſs. It was Gods Prerogative & great Power, his Creating Power to command the light to ſhine out of darkneſs; now a Chriſtian is partaker of the Divine Nature, ſo the Scripture ſaith, Grace it is part of the Divine Nature, and being part of the Divine nature, it hath an impreſſion of Gods Omnipotent power, that is, to create light out of darkneſs, to bring good out of evil, now by this way a Chriſtian comes to be content. God hath given a Chriſtian ſuch a virtue, as can turn afflictions into mercies, can turn darkneſs into light; if a man had the power that Chriſt had when the water pots were fil'd, he could by a word turn the water into wine; if you that have nothing but water to drink, yet if you had a power to turn it into wine, then you may be contented: certainly, a Chriſtian hath received this power from God, to work thus miraculouſly; it is the nature of grace to turn water into wine, that is, to turn the water of your affliction, into the wine of Heavenly conſolation, If you underſtand this in a carnal way, I know it will be ridiculous for a Miniſter to ſpeak thus before you, and many carnal people are readie to make ſuch expreſſions as theſe to be ridiculous, underſtanding them in a carnal way: Juſt as *Nichodemus* in the 3. of *John*. what can a

man be born when he is old, can he enter the second time into his mothers womb and be born? So when we speak of grace, that it can turn water into wine, and turn poverty into riches, and make poverty a gainfull trade, saith a carnal heart, Let them have that trade if they will, and let them have water to drink, and see if they can turn it into wine: Oh! take heed thou speakest not in a scornfull way of the ways of God; grace hath the power to turn afflictions into mercies. Two men shall have one affliction, and to one man it shall be as gall and wormwood, and it shall be wine, and honey, and delightfulnes, and joy, and advantage, and riches, to another. This is the mystery of Contentment, not so much by removing the evil, as by metamorphosing the evil, by changing the evil into good.

The fifth thing is this, *A Christian comes to this Contentment, by making up the wants of his condition, by the performance of the work of his condition.* This is the way of Contentment. There is such a condition that I am in, many wants, I want this and the other comfort, well, how shall I come to be satisfied and content? A carnal heart thinks this, I must have my wants made up, or else it is impossible that I should be content: No, but saith a gracious heart, What is the duty of the condition God hath put me into? Indeed my condition is changed, I was not long since in a prosperous condition, but God hath changed my condition; the Lord hath called me no more *Naomi*, but *Marah*; Now what am I to do? What can I think now? Are those duties that God requires of me in the condition that he hath now put me into? and let me put forth my strength in the performance of the duties of my present condition. Others they spend their thoughts in those things that shall disturb and disquiet them, and so they grow more and more discontented; yea, but let me spend my thoughts in thinking what my duty is, what is the duty of my present condition which I am in: Oh! saith a man whose condition is changed, and he hath lost his estate, Had I but my estate that I had heretofore, how would I use it to Gods glorie! But God hath made me to see that I did not honour him with my estate as I ought to have done, Oh! had I it again, I would do better than ever I did. But this may be but a temptatiō, therefore you should rather think, What doth God require of me in the condition I am now brought into? And thou shouldest labour to bring thy heart to quiet and Contentment, by setting thy soul on work about the duties of thy present condition: And the truth is, I know nothing more available for the quieting of a Christian Soul, & getting Contentment than this, The setting thy heart on work about the duties of thy very present condition that now thou art in, and take heed of thy thoughts about other conditions as a meer temptation. I cannot compare the folly of men and women that think to get Contentment with their musing about other conditions, better than to the way of Children; perhaps they are gotten upon an hill, and they look a good way off and see another hill, & they think if they were on the top of that, then they were able to touch the clouds with their fingers; but when they are on the top of that hill, alas, then they are as far from the clouds, as they were before. So it is with many that think, If they were in such a condition then they should have Contentment; & perhaps they get into that condition, and then they are as far from Contentment as before: But then they think if they were in another condition, they would be contented,

tended, and then when they have got into that condition, they are still as far from Contentment as before. No, no, let me consider what is the dutie of my present condition, and content my heart with this, and say, Well, though I am in a low condition, yet I am serving the Counsels of God in that condition wherein I am; it is the Counsel of God that hath brought me into this condition that I am in, and I desire to serve the Counsel of God in that condition. There is a notable Scripture concerning *David*, it is said of him, That he served his generation, after *David* had served his generation according to the Will of God, then he slept. It is a speech of *Paul* concerning him, in *Act.* 13. 36. So it is in your books, *After he had served his generation according to the Will of God:* But now the word that is translated *Will*, it is the *Counsel of God*, and so it may be translated as well, *That after* David *in his generation had served Gods Counsel, then he fell asleep.* We ordinarily take the words thus, That *David served his generation*; that is, He did the work of his generation, that is, to serve a mans generation. But it is more plain, if you read it thus, After *David* in his generation had served the Counsel of God, then *David* fell asleep. O! that should be the care of a Christian to serve out Gods Counsels. What is the Counsel of God? The condition that I am in, God doth put me into it by his own Counsel, the Counsel of his own Will; Now I must serve Gods Counsel in my generation, look what is the Counsel of God in my condition, I must look to serve that; and so I shall have my heart quieted for the present, and shall live and die peaceably, and comfortably, if I be carefull to serve Gods Counsel.

A sixth thing in the Mysterie of Contentment is this, *A gracious heart is contented by the melting of his will & desires into Gods will and desires*, by this means he gets Contentment; and this is a Mysterie to a carnal heart. It is not by having his own desires satisfied as before, but by melting his will and desires into Gods Will: So that he comes to have (in one sense) his desires satisfied, though he hath not the thing that before he did desire, yet he comes to be satisfied in this, because he makes his will to be all one with Gods will. This is a little higher degree than submitting to the will of God. You all say, you should submit to Gods will; but a Christian hath gotten beyond this; that is, he can make Gods will and his to be the same: so it is said of believers, that they are joyned to the Lord, and are one spirit; that is, look what Gods Will is, I do not onely see reason to submit to it, but Gods Will is my Will: When the Soul can make over (as it were) its Will to God, it must needs then have Contentment. Others would fain get the thing they do desire, O! but saith a gracious heart, that that God would have, I would have too; I will not onely yield to it, but I would have it too; A gracious heart hath learn'd this art, Not onely to make the Commanding will of God to be its own will, that is, What God commands me to do, I will do it; but to make the Providential Will of God, and the Operative Will of God to be his will also: God commands this thing, which perhaps you that are Christians may have some skill in, but whatsoever God works, you must will as well as what God commands, you must make Gods Providential Will, and his Operative Will, as well your Will as Gods Will, and so you must come to Contenment:

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Here a Christian makes over his will to God, and in making over his Will to God, he hath no other Will but onely Gods: As suppose a man makes over his Debt to another man, if that man that I ow the Debt to, be satisfied and contented, I am satisfied, because I have made it over to him, and I need not be discontented, and say, My debt is not paid, and I am not satisfied; Yes, you are satisfied, for he that you made over your debt to, he is satisfied. Just thus it is, for all the world, between God and a Christian, a Christian heart makes over his Will to God; now then, if Gods Will be satisfied, then I am satisfied, for I have then no will of mine own, it is melted into the Will of God; for that is the excellencie of Grace, Grace doth not onely subject the Will to God, but it doth melt the Will into Gods Will, so that they are now but one Will; what a sweet satisfaction must the soul have then in this condition, when all is made over to God? You will say, This is hard. I will express it a little more: A gracious heart must needs have satisfaction this way, because godliness doth teach him this. To see that his good is more in God than in himself; the good of life, and comforts, and my happiness, and my glory, and my riches is more in God than it is in my self: (that perhaps we may speak too further, when we come to the Lessons that are to be learned.) But upon that it is, that a gracious heart hath Contentment, he doth melt his Will into Gods, for saith he, If God have glory, I have glory, Gods glory is my glory, and therefore Gods will is mine; if God have riches, then I have riches; if God be magnified, then I am magnified; if God be satisfied, then I am satisfied; Gods wisdom and holiness is mine, and therefore his will must needs be mine, and my Will must needs be his; here is the Art of a Christians Contentment, he melts his Will into the Will of God, and makes over his Will to God, *O Lord, thou shalt chuse our inheritance for us.* Psalm 73.

The seventh thing in the Art of Contentment is this, *The Mysterie consists not so much by bringing any thing without, to make my condition more comfortable, as to purge out some thing that is within.* The men of the world now, when they would have contentment, and want any thing, O they must have somewhat from without to content them; but saith a godly man, let me get something out that is in already, and then I shall come to Contentment; As suppose a man hath an aguish humour that makes his drink tast bitter, now saith he, You must put some sugar into my drink, and his wife puts in some, and yet the drink tasts bitter, Why? Because the bitterness comes from a bitter chollerick humour within; but let the Physician come and give him a bitter Potion to purge out the bitterness that is within, and then he can tast his drink well enough: Just thus it is with the men of the world, O such a condition is bitter, and if I could have such a mercy added to this mercy, then it would be sweet; now if God should put a spoonfull or two of Sugar in, it would be bitter still. But the way to Contentment, is to purge out thy lusts and bitter humours. *James* 4. 1. *From whence are wars, and strifes, are they not from your lusts that are within you?* They are not so much from things without, but from within; as sometimes I have said, It is not all the storms that are abroad that can make an earth-quake, but the vapours that are got within: and so if those lusts that are within thy heart, if they were got out, thy condition would be a

content-

contented condition. Theſe are the myſterious ways of Godlineſs, that the men of the world never think of. When didſt thou ever think of ſuch a way as this is, for to go and purge out the diſtempers of thy heart that are within: Here are ſeven particulars now named, there were a great many more that I had thought of. And now without the underſtanding of theſe things, and the practice of them, you will never come to a true contentation in your way, Oh you will be bunglers in this trade of Chriſtianitie; but the right perceiving of theſe things, will help you to be inſtructed in it as in a Myſterie.

Sermon III.

Philippians 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content.

THe Myſterie of Contentment will appear yet further. A gractius heart gets Contentment in a myſterious way, a way that the world is not acquainted with.

Eighthly, *He lives upon the dew of Gods bleſſing.* It is the ſimilitude of one *Adrian Junius*, ſetting out a contented man by a *Graſhopper*, leaping and ſkipping up and down, that lives upon the dew, and he hath this motto, *I am content with what I have, and hope for better.* A graſhopper doth not live upon the graſs as other things do, you cannot know what it feeds upon, other things, though as little as graſhoppers, yet feed upon ſeeds or little flies, and ſuch things, but the graſhopper, you know not what it feeds upon. So a Chriſtian can get food that the world knows not of, in a ſecret way is a Chriſtian fed by the dew of the bleſſing of God, a poor man or woman that hath but a little which hath Grace, lives a more contented life than his rich neighbour that hath a great deal coming in, we find it ſo ordinarily, ſo that though they have but a little, yet they have a ſecret bleſſing of God going in it, that they are not able to expreſs to any other man; if you would come to them and ſay, How comes it that you live ſo comfortably as you do? they are not able to tell you what they have, but they find there is a ſweetneſs in what they do enjoy, and they know this by experience, that they never had ſuch ſweetneſs in former times, though they had more plenty in former times than now they have, yet they know they had not ſuch ſweetneſs; but how this comes, they cannot tell; and we may ſhew ſome particulars, even in that Godly men do enjoy, that make their condition to be ſweet.

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As now, Take these four or five particulars that a Godly man finds Contentment in what he hath, though it be never so little.

1. *Because in what he hath, he hath the love of God*, he hath Gods love to him in what he hath: If a King should send a piece of meat from his own table, it is a great deal more comfortable to a Courtier, than if he had twenty dishes at ordinary allowance; if the King send but any little thing, and say, Go and carry this to such a man as a token of my love, Oh how delightfull is that unto him? Are your husbands at Sea, and send you a token of their love, it is more than fourty times so much that you have in your houses already: Every good thing the people of God do enjoy, they enjoy it in Gods love, as a token of Gods love, and coming from Gods eternal love unto them, this must needs be very sweet unto them.

2. *What they have it is sanctified to them for good*; Other men have what they enjoy in a way of common providence, but the Saints in a special way; Others have, what they have and there is all, they have meat, and drink, and houses, and cloaths, and money, and that is all. But a gracious heart finds Contentment in this, I have it, and I have a sanctified use of it too; I find God going along with what I have to draw my heart neerer to him, and sanctifie my heart to him: If I find my heart drawn neerer to God by what I enjoy; it is more a great deal than if I have it without any sanctifying my heart by it; there is a secret dew that goes along with it, there is the dew of Gods love in it, and the dew of sanctification.

3. *A gracious heart what he hath, he hath it upon free-cost, he is not like to be called to pay for what he hath*: The difference between what a godly man hath, and a wicked man, is in this: A godly man is as a child in an Inne; an Inkeeper hath his child in his house, and the Father provides his diet, and lodging, and what is fit for him; Now there comes a stranger, and the stranger hath dinner and supper provided, and lodging, but the stranger must pay for all; it may be the childs fare is meaner than the fare of the stranger, the stranger hath boild, and rost, and bak'd; but he must pay for it, there must come a reckoning for it. Just thus it is, many of Gods people have but mean fare; but God as a Father provides it, and it is on free-cost, and they must not pay for what they have, it is paid for before; but the wicked in all their pomp, and pride, and bravery, they have what they call for, but there must come a reckoning for all, they must pay for all in the conclusion: And is it not better to have a little upon free cost, than to come to have all to pay for? Grace doth shew a man, that what he hath, he hath it on free cost, from God as from a Father, and therefore must needs be very sweet.

Fourthly, A godly man may very well be content, though he hath but little, *For what he hath he hath it by right of Jesus Christ, by the purchase of Jesus Christ*, he hath a right to it, another manner of right to what he hath, than any wicked man can have to what he hath; a wicked man hath these outward things; I do not say they are usurpers of what they have, but they have a right to it, and that before God, but how? it is a right by meer donation, that is, God by his free bounty doth give it to them; but the right that the Saints have, it is a right of purchase, it is paid for, and it is their own, and they may

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in a holy manner, and holy way, challenge whatsoever they have need of. We cannot express the right of a holy man, the difference between his right, and the right of the wicked more fully than by this similitude; A Malefactor that is condemned to die, yet he hath by favour granted to him his supper provided over night, and you cannot say, though the Malefactor hath forfeited all his right to all things, to every bit of bread, yet if he shall have a supper granted to him, he doth not steal it, though all his right is forfeited by his fault; after he is once condemned he hath no right to any thing. So it is with the wicked, they have forfeited all their right to all comforts in this world, they are condemned by God as Malefactors, and are going to execution; but if God will in his bounty give them something to preserve them here in the world, they cannot be said to be theeves or robbers: Now a man hath granted to him a supper over night before his execution, but is that like the supper that he was wont to have in his own house, when he eat his own bread, and had his wife and children about him? Oh! a dish of green herbs at home would be a great deal better, than any dainties in such a supper as that is; but now a child of God hath not a right meerly by donation, but what he hath it is his own through the purchase of Christ; every bit of bread that thou eatest, if thou beest a godly man or woman, Jesus Christ hath bought it for thee, thou goest to Market and buyest thy meat and drink with thy money, but know, that before thou hast bought it, or paid money, Christ hath bought it at the hand of God the Father with his bloud; thou hast it at the hands of men for money, but Christ hath bought it at the hand of his Father by his bloud: And certainly it is a great deal better and sweeter now, though it be but a little.

Fifthly, There is another thing that shews the sweetness that there is in that little that the Saints have, by which they come to have Contentment, whereas others cannot: that is, *Every little that they have, it is but as an earnest penny of all the glorie that is reserved for them, it is given them by God, but as the fore-runner of those eternal mercies that the Lord intends for them.* Now if a man hath but twelve pence given to him, as an earnest penny, for some great possession that he must have; is not that better than if he had fourty pounds given unto him otherwise? So every comfort that the Saints have in this world, it is an earnest penny to them of those eternal mercies that the Lord hath provided for them; as every affliction that the wicked have here, it is but the beginning of sorrows, and fore-runner of those eternal sorrows that they are like to have hereafter in Hell; so every comfort thou hast, is a fore-runner of those eternal mercies thou shalt have with God in Heaven; not onely the consolations of Gods Spirit are the fore-runners of those eternal comforts thou shalt have in Heaven; but when thou sittest at thy Table, and rejoycest with thy Wife and Children, and Friends, thou mayest look upon every one of those but as a fore-runner, yea, the very earnest peny of Eternal life unto thee. Now then if this be so, no marvel though a Christian be contended; (this is a Mystery to the wicked:) I have what I have out of the love of God, and I have it sanctified to me by God, and I have it of free-cost from God by the purchase of the bloud of Jesus Christ, and I have it as a fore-runner of

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those eternal mercies that are reserved for me; and in this my soul rejoyces. There is a secret dew of Gods goodness and blessing upon him in his estate, that others have not: and by all this you may see the meaning of that Scripture, *Prov.*16.8. *Better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right.* A man that hath but a little, yet if he hath it with righteousness, it is better than a great deal without right; yea, better than the great revenues of the wicked: so you have it in another Scripture. That is the next particular in *Christian Contentment*; the Mystery is in this, That he lives upon the dew of Gods blessing in all the good things that he doth enjoy.

The Ninth thing wherein the Mystery of *Christian Contentment* consists, is this: *Not onely the good things that he hath, he hath the dew of Gods blessing in them, and they are very sweet to him; but all the afflictions, all the evils that do befall him, he can see love in them all; and can enjoy the sweetness of love in his afflictions, as well as in his mercies.* Yea, the truth is, The afflictions of Gods people comes from the same eternal love that Jesus Christ did come from. And that speech of *Hierom*, *He is a happy man that is beaten, when the stroke is a stroke of love.* All Gods strokes are strokes of love and mercie, *All Gods ways are mercie and truth to those that fear him and love him*, *Psal.*25.10. The ways of God, the ways of affliction, as well as the ways of prosperity, are mercie and love to him. Grace gives a man an eye, a piercing eye to pierce into the Counsels of God, those eternal Counsels of God for good unto him, even in his afflictions to see the love of God in every affliction as well as in prosperity. Now this is a Mystery to carnal hearts, they can see no such thing, perhaps they think God loves them when he prospers them, and makes them rich; but they think God loves them not when he doth afflict them, that is a Mysterie; but grace instructs men in that Mystery, grace enables men to see love in the very frowns of Gods face, and so comes to receive Contentment.

In the Tenth place, A godly man hath Contentment in the way of a Mystery, *Because as he sees all his afflictions come from the same love that Jesus Christ did; so he sees them all sanctified in Jesus Christ, sanctified as a Mediator*; he sees (I say) all the sting and venom, and poison of them all to be taken out by the virtue of Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and man: As now for instance, Thus, a Christian, when he would have Contentment, fals a working, What is my affliction? Is it poverty that God strikes me withall? Jesus Christ had not a house to hide his head in; the Fowls of the air had nests, and the Foxes had holes, but the Son of Man not a hole to hide his head in: now my poverty is sanctified by Christs poverty, I can see by faith the curse and sting and venom of my poverty, taken out by the poverty of Jesus Christ, Christ Jesus he was poor in this World to deliver me from the curse of my poverty, that it should not be cursed unto me, then my poverty is not afflictive, if I can be contented in such a condition. That is the way, not to stand and repine, because I have not what others have, no, but I am poor, and Christ was therefore poor, that he might bless my poverty to me.

And so again, Am I discouraged, dishonoured, is my good name taken away? why Jesus Christ he had dishonour put upon him, he was called *Beelzebub*, and a Samaritan, and they said he had a Devil in him, all the foul aspersions

sions that could be were cast upon Jesus Christ, and this was for me, that I might have the disgrace that is cast upon me to be sanctified unto me; whereas another man his heart is overwhelmed with dishonour and disgrace, and he goes this way to work to get Contentment; perhaps if you be spoken ill of, you have no other way to ease and right your selves, but if they do rail upon you, you will rail upon them again; and thus you think to ease your selves: Oh! but a Christian hath another manner of way to ease himself; Others rail and speak ill of me, but did they not rail upon Jesus Christ, and speak evill of him? And what am I in comparison of Christ? And the subjection of Christ to such an evil, it was for me, that though such a thing should come upon me, I might know that the curse of it is taken from me through Christs subjection to that evil: thus a Christian can be contented when any body speaks ill of him: Now this is a Mystery to you, to get Contentment after such a manner as this is. So, if men jeer and scoff at you, Did they not do so to Jesus Christ? they jeer'd and scoff'd at him, and that when he was in his greatest extremity upon the Cross, say they, Here's the King of the Jews, and they bowed the knee, and said, Hail King of the *Jews*, and put a Reed into his hand and mocked him. Now I get Contentment in the midst of scorns and jeers, by considering that Christ was scorn'd, and by acting Faith upon that which Christ did suffer for me. So, am I in great pain of my body? Jesus Christ had as great pain upon his body as I have; though it is true, he had not such kind of sicknesses as we have, but yet he had as great pain and tortures in his body, and that that was deadly to him, as well as any sickness is to us: The exercising of Faith upon what Christ did endure, that is the way to get Contentment in the midst of our pains: one lies vexing and fretting and cannot bear his pain: Art thou a Christian? hast thou ever tried this way of getting Contentment, to act thy faith upon all the pains and sufferings that Jesus Christ did suffer? this would be the way of Contentment; and a Christian gets Contentment under pains after this manner: sometimes one that is very godly and gracious, you shall have him lie under grievous pains and extremities very cheerfully, and you wonder at it; this is the way that he gets it, he gets it by acting his Faith upon what pains Jesus Christ did suffer. Thou art afraid of death? the way to get Contentment, it is, by exercising thy Faith upon the death of Jesus Christ; yea, it may be thou hast inward troubles in thy soul, and God withdraws himself from thee, but still thy Faith is to be exercised upon the sufferings that Jesus Christ endured in his Soul, he powred forth his Soul before God, then when he sweat drops of water and bloud, he was in an Agonie in his very Spirit, and he found even God himself in a way to forsake him; now the acting thy Faith upon Jesus Christ thus, brings Contentment; And is not this a Mystery to carnal hearts? A gracious heart finds Contentment in a way of a Mystery: no marvail though Saint *Paul* saith, *I am instructed in a Mystery, to be contended in whatsoever condition I am in.*

In the Eleventh place, There is yet a further Mystery (for this I hope you will find a very usefull point unto you) & you will see what a plain way there is, (before we have done) for one that is skilled in Religion to get Contentment, though it is hard for one that is carnal. I say, the eleventh Mystery

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in Contentment is this, *A gracious heart hath Contentment by fetching ſtrength from Jeſus Chriſt, he is able to bear his burden by fetching ſtrength from another.* Now this is a riddle indeed, and it would be a ridiculous thing to be ſpoken of in the Schools of Philoſophers, to ſay, If there be a burden upon you, you muſt fetch ſtrength from another; indeed to have another to come and ſtand under the burden, that way they would know; but that you ſhall be ſtrengthened by anothers ſtrength, that is not neer you to your outward view, that they would think ridiculous: but now a Chriſtian finds ſatisfaction in every condition by getting ſtrength from another, by going out of its ſelf to Jeſus Chriſt, and by faith acting upon Chriſt, and bringing the ſtrength of Jeſus Chriſt into its own ſoul, and thereby is enabled to bear whatſoever God layes upon him, by the ſtrength that he finds from Jeſus Chriſt: *Of his fulneſs do we receive grace for grace*; there is ſtrength in Chriſt, not onely to ſanctifie and ſave us, but ſtrength to ſupport us under all our burdens and afflictions, and Chriſt expects, that when we are under any burden, that we would act our faith upon him to draw virtue and ſtrength from him; the acting of *Faith*, that is the great grace that is to be acted under afflictions, it is true, other graces ſhould be acted, but the grace of *Faith* it draws ſtrength from Chriſt, in looking upon him that hath the fulneſs of all ſtrength to be conveyed into the hearts of all believers. Now if a man hath a burden upon him, yet if he can have ſtrength added to him, if the burden be doubled, yet if he can have his ſtrength to be trebled, the burden will not be heavier but lighter than it was before to our natural ſtrength. Indeed our afflictions may be heavy, and we crie out, O we cannot bear them, we cannot bear ſuch an affliction: Though thou canſt not tell how to bear it with thine own ſtrength, yet what canſt thou tell what thou ſhalt do with the ſtrength of Jeſus Chriſt? Thou ſayeſt thou canſt not bear it, why doeſt thou think that Chriſt could not bear it? if Chriſt could bear it, why mayeſt not thou come to bear it? You will ſay, Can I have the ſtrength of Chriſt? Yea, that is made over to thee by faith, ſo the Scripture ſaith, *That the Lord is our ſtrength*, God himſelf is our ſtrength, and Chriſt is our ſtrength, divers Scriptures we have that way; that Chriſts ſtrength is thine, made over to thee, that ſo thou mayeſt be able to bear whatſoever lies upon thee, and therefore we find ſuch a ſtrange kind of expreſſion in the Epiſtle of Saint *Paul* to the *Coloſſians*, praying for the Saints, *That they might be ſtrengthened with all might, according unto his glorious power*, unto what? *Unto all patience and long-ſuffering with joyfulneſs. Strengthned with all might, according to the power of God, the glorious power of God, unto all patience, and long-ſuffering with joyfulneſs*; You may not therefore be content with a little ſtrength, ſo that you are able to bear what a man might bear by the ſtrength of reaſon and nature; But to be ſtrengthned with all might, according to the glorious power of God, unto all patience, and to all long-ſuffering; Oh you that are now under very heavy and ſad afflictions more than ordinarie, look upon this Scripture, and conſider how this Scripture is made good in you, why may you not have this Scripture made good in you, if you be godly? You ſhould not be quiet in your own ſpirits, except that you in ſome meaſure do get this Scripture to be made good in you, ſo that you

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may with some comfort say, through Gods mercie I find that strength coming into me that is here spoken of in this Scripture. You should labour when you are under any great affliction (you that are godly) to walk so, that others may see such a Scripture made good in you; Here is the glorious Power of God that doth strengthen his servants to all long-suffering; and that with joyfulness. Alas it may be you do not exercise so much patience, as a wise man or a wise woman, that hath but natural reason. But where is the power of God, the glorious power of God? where's the strengthening with all might, unto all long-suffering and patience, and that with joyfulness? It is true, the spirit of a man may be able to sustain his infirmities, may be able to sustain and keep up his spirits, the naturall spirit of a man, but much more then, when this spirit is acted with grace and holiness, and when it is fill'd with the strength of Jesus Christ; this is the way of a godly mans getting Contentment, the Mysterie of it, is by fetching in strength from Jesus Christ.

Twelfthly, Another Mysterie that there is in it, it is, *That a Godly heart, enjoys much of God in every thing it hath, and doth know how to make up all wants in God himself:* that is another Mysterie, he hath God in what he hath; that I spoke to somewhat before, in shewing the dew of Gods blessing in what he hath, for God is able to let out a great deal of his power in little things, and therefore the miracles that God hath wrought, have been as much in little things as in great; now as God sets out a great deal of his power in working miracles in smaller things, so he lets out a great deal of goodness and mercie, in comforting and rejoycing the hearts of his people in little things, as well as in great; there may be as much riches in a pearl, as in a great deal of lumber; but now this is a distinct thing.

Further, a gracious heart, as he lives upon Gods dew in a little that he hath, so when that little that he hath shall be taken from him, what shall he do then? Then you will say, If a man have nothing, there can be nothing fetcht out of nothing: But if the children of God have their little taken from them, they can make up all their wants in God himself: Such a man is a poor man, the plunderers came and took away all that he had, what shall he do then when all is gone? But when all is gone, there is an art and skill, that godliness teaches, to make up all those losses in God. Many men that have their houses burnt, go about gathering, and so get up by many hands a little; but a godly man knows whither to go to get up all, even in God himself, so as he shall enjoy the quintessence of the same good and comfort as he had before, for a godly man doth not live so much in himself, as he lives in God. This is now a Mysterie to a carnal heart; I say, a gracious man doth live so much in himself, as he doth in God, he lives in God continually, if there be any thing cut off from the Stream, he knows how to go to the Fountain, and makes up all there; God is his All in All while he lives; I say, 'tis God that is his All in All. *Am not I to thee* (saith *Elkanah* to *Hannah*) *instead of ten children?* So saith God to a gracious heart, Thou wantest this, thy Estate is plundered: Why, Am not I to thee instead of ten houses, and ten shops? I am to thee instead of *All*; yet not onely *instead* of All, but come to me, and thou shalt *have All again in me*, This indeed is an excellent Art, To be able to draw from God what it had before in the crea-

ture: Christian, how didst thou enjoy Comfort before? Was the Creature any other to thee but a Conduit, a Pipe that did convey Gods goodness to thee? The Pipe is cut off, saith God, come to me the Fountain, and drink immediately; though the Beams be taken away, yet the Sun remains the same in the Firmament that ever it was: What is that that satisfies God himself, but because he doth enjoy all Fulness in Himself? so he comes to have satisfaction in Himself: Now if thou enjoyest God to be thy portion, if thy soul can say with the Church, in *Lament.* 3. 24. *The Lord is my portion, saith my soul.* Why shouldest thou not be satisfied and contented as God? God is contented, he is in Eternal Contentment in himself; now if thou hadst that God to be thy portion, why shouldest not thou be contented with Him alone? God is contented with himself alone; if thou hast him, thou mayest be contented with him alone; and it may be, that is the Reason, that thy outward Comforts are taken from thee, that God may be All in All to thee: It may be whilst thou hadst these things here, they did share with God in thy affection, a great part of the stream of thy affection ran that way; now God would have the full stream run to him: As you know it is with a man that hath Water come to his House, and if there be several Pipes, upon which he finds the Water comes but scantly into his Wash-house, he will rather stop the other Pipes, that he may have all the Water come in where he would have it. So here, it may be God had some stream of thy affection that ran to him then, when thou didst enjoy these things; yea, but a great deal was let out to the Creature, a great deal of thy affections did run waste; Now the Lord would not have the affections of his Children to run waste; he doth not care for other mens affections, but for thine they are precious, and God would not have them to run waste, therefore doth he cut off thy other Pipes, that thy heart might run wholly upon him: As if you have Children, because you have servants, perhaps, do feed them, and give them things, you perceive that your servants do steal away the hearts of your Children, you would hardly be able to bear it, you would be readie to turn away such a servant, and when the servant is gone, the child is at a great loss, it hath not the Nurse; but the Father or Mother intends, by her putting away, that the affections of the Child might run the more strongly towards himself, or her self; and what loss hath the Child? that the affections, that ran in a rough channel before towards the servant, it runs now towards the Mother? So, those affections that run towards the Creature, God would have them run towards Himself, that so he may be All in All to thee here in this world. And a gracious heart can indeed tell how to enjoy God to be All in All to him: that is the happiness of Heaven, to have God to be All in All. The Saints in heaven have not Houses, and Lands, and Money, and Meat, and Drink, and Clothes. You will say, They do not need them: Why do they not? It is because God is All in All to them immediately. Now while thou livest in this world, thou mayest come to enjoy much of God, you may have much of Heaven; while we live here in this life, we may come to enjoy much of the very life that there is in Heaven, and what is that but the enjoyment of God to be All in All to us? There is one Text in the *Revelations* that speaks of the glorious condition of the Church that is like to be even here in this world, *Revel.* 21. 21.

21. 21. *And I saw no Temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb are the Temple of it; and the City had no need of the Sun, neither of the Moon to shine in it, for the Glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.* They had no need of the Sun or Moon. It speaks of such a glorious condition that the Church is like to be in here in this world; this doth not speak of Heaven: and that appears plainly that this is not spoken of Heaven, but of a glorious estate that the Church shall be in here in this world, for it follows presently in the 24 and 26. verse. *And they* (speaking of the Kings of the earth:) *And the Kings of the Earth do bring their glory and honour unto it.* Why? the Kings of the Earth shall not bring their glory and honour into Heaven; but this is such a time when the Kings of the Earth shall bring their glory and honour to the Church. And in the 26 verse, *And they shall bring the glory and honour of the Nations into it*; therefore it must needs be meant here in this world, and not in Heaven: Now if there be such a time here in this World, that God shall be All in All, that in comparison there shall be no such need of creatures as now there is, then the Saints should labour to live as neer that life as possibly they can, that is, To make up All in God: Oh that you would but mind this Mystery, that it may be a reality to the hearts of the Saints in such times as these are, they would find this priviledge, that they get by Grace, to be worth thousands of worlds: Hence is that of *Jacob* that I mentioned in another case, it is remarkable, and comes in fully here, in *Gen* 33. that norable speech of *Jacob* when his brother *Esau* did meet him, ye find in one place, that *Esau* he refused *Jacobs* present in the 8 verse, when *Jacob* gave his present to him, he refused it, and told *Jacob* that he had enough; *What meanest thou by all this drove which I met? And he said, These are to find grace in thy sight: And* Esau *said, I have enough.* Now in the 11. verse there *Jacob* urges it, and saith, *Jacob, I beseech thee take it, for I have enough:* Now in your books it is the same in English, *I have enough* (saith *Esau*;) and *I have enough* (saith *Jacob*:) but in the Hebrew, *Jacobs* word is different from *Esau's*, *Jacobs* word signifies, *I have all things*, and yet *Jacob* was poorer than *Esau*. Oh this should be a shame to us, that an *Esau* should say, I have enough; but now a Christian should say, I have not onely enough, but *I have all:* how hath he all? Because he hath God that is All, and it was a notable speech of one, *He hath all things, that hath him that hath all things.* Surely thou hast all things, because thou hast him *for thy Portion* who hath all things: God hath all things in himself, and thou hast God to be thine for thy portion, and in that thou hast all, and this is the Mysterie of Contentment: It makes up all wants in God, this is that that the men of the world have little skill in.

Now I have divers other things to open in the Mysterie of Contentment. I should shew likewise that a godly man, not onely makes up all in God, but finds enough in himself to make up all, to make up all in himself, not from himself, but in himself, and that may seem to be stranger than the other: to make up all in God is somewhat, nay, to make up all in himself not from himself, but in himself, that is, a gracious heart hath so much of God within himself, that he hath enough there to make up all his wants that are without. In *Prov.* 14. 14. *A good man shall be satisfied from himself*, from that that is within

himself, that is the meaning, a gracious man he hath a bird within his own bosom that makes him melodie enough, though he wants musick, *The Kingdom of Heaven is within you:* In *Luke* 17. 21. *He hath a Kingdom within him, and a Kingdom of God:* you see him spoken ill of abroad, he hath a conscience within him that makes up the want of a name and credit, that is instead of a thousand witnesses.

Thirteenth, *A gracious heart fetches Contentment from the Covenant that God hath made with him.* Now this is a way of fetching Contentment that the men of the world know not of; they can fetch Contentment, if they have the creature to satisfie them: But to fetch Contentment from the Covenant of grace, that they have little skill in. I should here have opened two things: First, how to fetch Contentment from the Covenant of grace in general. (But I shall speak to that in the next Sermon, and now onely a word to the Second.) Secondly, how he fetches Contentment from the particular branches of the Covenant, that is from the particular Promise that he hath for the supplying of every particular want: there is no condition that a godly man or woman can be in, but there is some Promise or other in the Scripture to help him in that condition. And that's the way of his Contentment, to go out to the Promises, and fetch from the Promise, that which may supply. But this is but a dry business to a carnal heart; but it's the most real thing in the world to a gracious heart; when he finds want of Contentment he repairs to the Promise, and the Covenant; and falls a pleading the Promises that God hath made. As I should have shewen several Promises that God hath made, let the affliction be what it will, I will but onely mention one that is the saddest affliction of all; in case of the Visitation, and the Plague. In *Psal.* 91. now those that cannot have their friends come to them by reason of the Plague, and that cannot have other comforts; in other afflictions they might have their friends, and other things to comfort them, but in that they cannot, *Psal.* 21. 20. *There shall no evill befall thee, neither shall any Plague come nigh thy dwelling*; then here is a Promise for the Pestilence in the 5. and 6. verses, this is a Scripture to those that are in danger of it. You will say, This is a promise that the Plague shall not come nigh them; but marke these two are joyned, *There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall the Plague come nigh thee*; the *evil of it* shall not come nigh thee.

Object. You will say, *it doth come to many godly men, and how can they make use of this Scripture? it is rather a Scripture that may trouble them, because here's a Promise that it shall not come nigh them, and yet it doth come nigh them as well as others.*

Ans. First, this is the Answer I would give, The promises of outward deliverances that were made to the People of God in the time of the Law, were to be understood then a great deal more litterally, and fulfilled more litterally than in the times of the Gospel, God makes it up otherwise with as much mercy; though God made a Covenant of grace and eternal life in Christ with them, yet I think there was another Covenant too, that God speaks of as a distinct Covenat for outward things, to deal with his people by, according to their ways, either in outward prosperity, or in outward afflictions, more than now, in

in a more punctual set way, than in the times of the Gospel; and therefore when the *Children of Israel* did but sin against God, they were sure to have publick judgements to come upon them, and if they did well, always publick mercies; The general constant way of God was to deal with the people of the Jews according as they did well, or ill, (in an ordinarie way,) with outward judgements, and outward mercies: but it is not so now in these times of the Gospel; we cannot bring such a certain conclusion, that God did deal so severely with men by such and such afflictions, that he will deal so with them now: and so, that they shall have outward prosperity as they had then: therefore that's the first thing, for the understanding of this, and all other Texts of that kind.

The second answer I would give is this, It may be their Faith doth not reach to this promise; and God brings many times many outward afflictions, because the Faith of his people doth not reach the promise, & that not onely in the old Testament, but in the times of the new Testament; *Zachariah* his time may be said to be in the time of the new Testament, when he was struck with dumbnes, because he did not believe, and that is given to be the cause, why he was struck with dumbnes. But you will say now, hath Faith warrant to believe deliverance, that it shall be fully delivered? I dare not say so, but it may act upon it, to believe that God will make it good his own way; perhaps you have not done so much, and so upon that, this promise is not fulfilled to you.

Thirdly, When God doth make such promises to his people, yet still it must be with this reservation, that God must have liberty to these three things.

1. That notwithstanding his promise, he will have liberty to make use of any thing for your chastisement.

2. That he must have liberty, to make use of your Estates, or liberties, or lives, for the furtherance of his own ends: If it be to be a stumbling block to wicked and ungodly men, God must have liberty; though he hath made a promise to you, he will not lose the propriety that he hath in your Estates and lives.

3. God must have so much liberty to make use of what you have, for to shew that his wayes are unsearchable, and his judgements past finding out. God reserves these three things in his hand still.

Object. But you will say, *what good then is there in such a promise that God makes to his people?*

Answ. 1. That thou art under the protection of God more than others. But what comfort is this if it doth befal me?

Answ. Thou hast this comfort, that the evil of it shall be taken from thee, that if God will make use of this affliction for other ends, yet he will do it so, as he will make it up to thee some other way. Perhaps you have given your children such a thing, but yet afterwards if you have use of that thing, you will come and say, I must have it, why Father may the child say, you gave it me? But saith the Father I must have it, and I will make it up to you some other way: Now the child doth not think that the Fathers love is ever a whit the less to him. So when there is any such promise as this is, that God by his

promiſe gives thee his protection, and yet for all that ſuch a thing befalls thee, it is but as if the father ſhould ſay, I gave you that indeed, but let me have it, and I will make it up to you ſome other way that ſhall be as good; ſaith God, Let me have your health and libertie, and life, and it ſhall be made up to you ſome other way.

Secondly, When ever the Plague, or Peſtilence comes to thoſe that are under ſuch a promiſe, it is for ſome ſpecial and notable work, and God requires of them to ſearch and examine in a ſpecial manner to find out his meaning; there is ſo much to be learned in the promiſe that God hath made concerning this particular evil, that the People of God, they may come to quiet and content their hearts in this affliction. I read in this Pſalm, that God hath made a Promiſe to his People, to deliver them from the Plague and Peſtilence, and yet do I find it to come: It may be I have not made uſe of my faith in this Promiſe heretofore; and if God do bring afflictions upon me, yet God will make it up ſome other way; God made a Promiſe to deliver me, or at leaſt to deliver me from all the evil of it, now if this thing doth befall me, and yet I have a Promiſe of God, certainly the evil of it is taken away, this Promiſe tells me, that if it doth befall me, yet it is for ſome notable end, and becauſe God hath uſe of my life, and intends to fetch about his glorie ſome way that I know not of: And if he will come in a fatherly way of chaſtiſement, yet I will be ſatisfied in the thing: ſo a Chriſtian heart by reaſoning out of the Word, comes to ſatisfie his ſoul in the midſt of ſuch a heavie hand of God, and in ſuch a diſtreſſed condition as that is. Now carnal hearts, they find not that power in the Word, that healing virtue that there is in the Word, to heal their diſtracted cares, and the troubles of their ſpirits; but now, thoſe that are Godly, when they come to hear the Word, they find out, that in the Word, there is as a plaiſter to all their wounds, and ſo they come to have eaſe and Contentment, in ſuch conditions as are very grievous and miſerable unto others. But now, for other particular Promiſes, and more generally for the Covenant of grace, how, and in what myſterious way the Saints do work, to fetch out Contentment and ſatisfaction to their ſouls, we ſhall refer to the next time.

Ser-

Sermon IV.

Philippians 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content.

IN the laſt Exerciſe we ſpoke of divers things in the Myſterie of Contentment, and in the cloſe, we ſpoke of two more, but we could not have time to open either of them, I ſhall open them a little more largely, and then proceed to ſome few more, and ſo to other things in the point.

That's the next then, A Chriſtian heart hath not onely Contentment in God, (and certainly, he that hath God, muſt have all, he that hath him that hath all, he hath all) *But he is able to make up all his outward wants of creature-comforts from what he finds in himſelf:* That may ſeem to be more ſtrange: It's true, perhaps we may convince men, though they do not feel by experience what it is to make up all in God, yet we may convince them, that if they have him that hath all things, then they have all; for there is ſuch a fulneſs in God, he being the infinite Firſt-being of all things, that may make up all their wants. But here's another thing, that's further; I ſay, A godly man can make up whatſoever he wants without the creature, he can make it up in himſelf, in *Prov.* 14. 14. *A good man is ſatisfied in himſelf:* as now, If he wants outward comforts, good chear, feaſting, a good Conſcience is a continual feaſt, he can make up the want of a feaſt by that peace he hath in his own Conſcience: if he wants melodie abroad, he hath a bird within him, that ſings the moſt melodious ſongs that are in the world, and the moſt delightfull. And then, Doth he want honour? he hath his own Conſcience witneſſing for him, that is as a thouſand witneſſes: The Scripture ſaith in *Luke* 17. v. 21. *Neither ſhall they ſay, Lo, here; or, Lo, there: for the Kingdom of God is within you*; A Chriſtian then, whatſoever he wants, he can make it up, for he hath a Kingdom in himſelf, the Kingdom of God is within him. If one that is a King, ſhould meet with a great deal of trouble when he is abroad, yet he contents himſelf with this, I have a Kingdom of mine own: now here it's ſaid, the Kingdom of God is within a man; truly, upon this Scripture, of the Kingdom of God being within, thoſe that are Learned, if they would but look into that Comment upon the Goſpel that we have of a Learned man, they ſhall find a very ſtrange conceit that he hath about this very Text, he confeſſes indeed it is unutterable; and ſo indeed it is: *The Kingdom of God is within you:* he makes it that there is ſuch a preſence of God and Chriſt within the ſoul of a man, that when

the bodie dies, (he ſaith) that the ſoul goes into God, and Chriſt that is within him; the ſouls going into God and Chriſt, and enjoying of that Communion with God and Chriſt that is within it ſelf, that's heaven to it (ſaith he.) He confeſſes he is not able to expreſs himſelf, nor others are not able to underſtand fully what he intends; but certainly for the preſent, before death, there is a Kingdom of God within the ſoul, ſuch a manifeſtation of God in the ſoul, that is enough to content the heart of any godly man in the world, the Kingdom that he hath now within him, he ſhall not ſtay till afterwards, till he goes to Heaven; but certainly there is a Heaven in the ſoul of a godly man, he hath Heaven already: Many times when you go to comfort your Friends in their afflictions, you will ſay, Heaven will pay for all; nay, you may certainly find Heaven pays for all already: there is a Heaven within the ſouls of the Saints, that's a certain truth, no ſoul ſhall ever come to Heaven, but that ſoul that hath Heaven come to it firſt. When you die, you hope you ſhall go to Heaven: But if you ſhall go to Heaven when you die, Heaven will come to you before you die. Now this is a great Myſterie, to have the Kingdom of Heaven in the ſoul, no man can know this but that ſoul that hath it; that Heaven which is within the ſoul for the preſent (I ſay) it is like the White Stone, and the New Name, that none but thoſe that have it can underſtand it: It's a miſerable condition, my Brethren, to depend upon creatures altogether for our Contentment; you know rich men account it a great happineſs, if they need not go to buy things by the penie as others do, they have all things for pleaſure or profit upon their own ground, and all their inheritance lies intire together, they have no bodie comes within them, but they have all within themſelves, there lies their happineſs: whereas other poorer people are fain to go from one Market to another, to provide them neceſſaries, but yet great rich men, they have Sheep, and Beeves, Corn, and Clothing, and all things elſe of their own within themſelves, and herein they place their happineſs. But this is the happineſs of a Chriſtian, that he hath that within himſelf, that may ſatisfie him more than all theſe; That place which we have in the firſt of *James*, ſeems to allude to that condition of men which have all their eſtates within themſelves, *James* 1. 4. *But let patience have her perfect work, that we may be perfect, and entire, wanting nothing:* the word there uſed, ſignifies to have the whole inheritance to our ſelves, not a broken inheritance, but that where all lies within themſelves; as a man that hath not a piece of his eſtate here, and a piece there, but he hath it all lie together; and the heart, being patient under afflictions, finds it ſelf to be in ſuch an eſtate as this is, finds his whole inheritance to be together, and all intire within it ſelf. And now ſtill to ſhew this by further ſimilitudes; it is with him, being fill'd with good things, juſt like as it is with many a man that enjoys abundance of comforts at home, at his own houſe, God grants to him a convenient Habitation, a comfortable Yoak-fellow, and fine Walks and Gardens, and hath all things at home that he could deſire; now this man cares not much for going abroad; other men are fain to go abroad to take the air, but he hath a ſweet air at home; and they are fain to go abroad to ſee friends, becauſe they have railings and contendings at home; many ill-husbands will give this reaſon (if his wife make any

moan

moan and complaint of his ill husbandrie) of their bad husbandrie, and will make that their excuſe to go abroad, becauſe they can never be quiet at home; now we account thoſe men moſt happie that have all at home; thoſe that have cloſe houſes that are unſavorie, and ſmell ill, they delight to go into the freſh air; but it is not ſo with many others that have theſe at home; thoſe that have no good chear at home, they are fain to go abroad to friends, but thoſe that have their tables furniſhed, they had as lieve ſtay at home: So, a carnal man, he hath but little Contentment in his own ſpirit; it's *Auſtins* ſimilitude, ſaith he, An ill Conſcience is like a ſcoulding wife; a man (ſaith he) that hath an ill conſcience he cares not to look into his own ſoul, but loves to be abroad and looks into other things, but never looks to himſelf; but one that hath a good conſcience, he delights in looking into his own heart, he hath a good conſcience within him: And ſo a carnal heart, becauſe ther's nothing but filthineſs, a filthie ſtink in himſelf, nothing but vileneſs, and baſeneſs within him, upon this it is that he ſeeks his contentment elſewhere: And as it is with a veſſel that is full of Liquor, if you ſtrike upon it, it will make no great noiſe; but if it be emptie, then it makes a great noiſe: So it is with the heart, An heart that is full of grace and goodneſs within, ſuch an one will bear a great many ſtroaks, & never make any noiſe, but an emptie heart, if that be ſtruck, that will make a noiſe; thoſe men & women that are ſo much complaining, and always whining, it is a ſign that there is an emptineſs in their hearts; but if their hearts were filled with Grace, they would not make ſuch a noiſe as now they do. As a man that hath his bones filled with Marrow, and veins filled with good Bloud, he complains not of cold as other do: ſo a gracious heart, having the ſpirit of God within him, and his heart filled with Grace, he hath that within him that makes him find contentment. It is a ſpeech of *Seneca*, Indeed thoſe things that I ſuffer will be incredible heavie, when I cannot bear my ſelf; but now if I be no burden to my ſelf, if I have all quiet within mine own heart, then I can bear any thing: many men through their wickedneſs, they have burdens without, but the greateſt burden is the wickedneſs of their own hearts, they are not burdened with their ſins in a godly way, that would eaſe their burden, but they have ſtill their wickedneſs in the power of it, and ſo they are burdens to themſelves. The diſtempers of mens hearts are mightie burdens to them; many times a godly man hath enough within to content him; Virtue it is content with its ſelf for to live well; (It's a ſpeech of *Cicero*, and it's in one of his Paradoxes) It finds enough within its own ſphear for the living happily: but how few are acquainted with this Myſterie? Many think, O if I had that that another man hath, how happily and comfortably ſhould I live: Oh but if thou beeſt a Chriſtian, whatſoever thy condition be, yet thou haſt enough within thy ſelf. You will ſay, ſuch and ſuch men that have all things, they need not be beholding to any body, you ſhall have many that will labour and take pains when they are young, that they might not be beholding to others, I love to live of my ſelf; now a Chriſtian may do ſo; not that he doth not live upon God (I mean not ſo) but upon that which he hath of God within himſelf, that he can live upon, although he doth not enjoy the comforts that are without himſelf, that's it which I mean, and thoſe that are

godly,

godly, and keep close to God in their Communion with him, they understand what I mean by this, that a Christian hath supply of all his wants within himself; and here you may see, that the spirit of a Christian is a precious spirit, a godly spirit is precious, why? because it hath enough to make him happy within himself.

The next thing that the Mysterie of Contentment consists in is this, *That a gracious heart fetches supply of all from the Covenant, and so comes to have Contentment*; which is a dry thing to a carnal spirit: Now there are two things here.

First, he fetches Contentment from the Covenant in general, that is, from the great Covenant that God hath made with him in Christ.

Secondly, From the particular promises that God hath made with him in the Covenant.

First, From the Covenant in general. I'le give you one Scripture for that, it is very remarkable, in the 2. of *Sam.* 23. vers. 5. *Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not grow.* It is a most admirable Scripture of *David*, that yet had not the Covenant of grace opened so fully as we have. But yet mark what *David* saith, Although I find not my house so, that is, so comfortably every way as I would, although it be not so, what hath he to content his spirit? saith he, He hath made with me an everlasting Covenant; this is that that helps all: I am not (may some men say) thus and thus with God, I do not find God come in so fully, or it is not with my house and family as I hoped it might be, perhaps there is this or that affliction upon my house; suppose you should have the plague come into your house, and your house is not safe, and you have not that outward comfort in your house as formerly you had, but can you read this Scripture, and say, Although my house be not so blest with health as other mens houses are; although my house be not so, yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, I am one yet in Covenant with God, the Lord hath made with me an everlasting Covenant: as for these things in this world, I see they are but momentary, they are not everlasting, I see in a family, when all was well but a week ago, now all is down, and the Plague hath swept away a great many of them, and the rest are left in sadness and mourning: we see there is no resting in the things of this world, yet the Lord hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things: I find disorder in my heart, in my family; but the everlasting Covenant, that is ordered in all things; yea, and that is sure: Alack, there is no sureness here in these things, I can be sure of nothing here, especially in these times, we know that a man can be sure of little that he hath, who can be sure of his Estate? perhaps some of you here that have lived well and comfortably before, and all was well about you, and you thought your mountain was strong, but you see within a day or two all taken away from you, so that there is no sureness in the things of this World? But saith he, the Covenant is sure; what I venture to Sea that is not sure, but here is an Assurance Office indeed, here is a great Assurance Office for the Saints, and they are not at charge, but onely the exercising of Grace, for they may go

to

to this Aſſurance Office to aſſure every thing that they venture, either to have the thing it ſelf, or be paid for it: In an Aſſurance Office you cannot be aſſured to have the very goods come in that you inſured, but if they be loſt, the Inſurers do engage themſelves to make it good to you And this Covenant of grace that God hath made with his people, it is Gods Aſſurance Office, and the Saints in all their fears may, and ought to go to the Covenant to aſſure all things to them, to aſſure their eſtates and aſſure their lives. You will ſay, How are they ſure, their lives and eſtates go as well as others? But God engages himſelf to make up all: And then mark what follows, *This is all my ſalvation.* Why *David*? wilt thou not have ſalvation from thine Enemies and outward dangers, from peſtilence and plague? The frame of his ſpirit is quieted, as if he ſhould ſay, If that ſalvation comes, well and good, I ſhall praiſe God for it, but that that I have in the Covenant, that's my ſalvation, I look upon that as enough: Yea, and then further, *This is all my ſalvation, and all my deſire*, Why *David?* is there not ſomething elſe that thou wouldeſt have beſides this Covenant? No ſaith he, It is all involved in this. Now ſurely thoſe men or women muſt needs live contented lives, that have all their deſires; now ſaith the holy man here, this is all my deſire; *And though he make it not to grow.* But for all this Covenant perhaps you will not proſper in the world as other men do: True, but I am at a point for that: Though God doth not make my houſe to grow, I have all my deſires.

Thus you ſee how a godly heart finds Contentment in the Covenant. Many of you ſpeak of the Covenant of God, and of the Covenant of Grace, but have you found it ſo effectual to your ſouls? have you ſuckt this ſweetneſs from the Covenant, and content to your hearts in your ſad conditions? It's a ſpecial ſign of the truth of Grace in any ſoul, that when any affliction doth befall him, in a kind of natural way he doth preſently repair to the Covenant; juſt as a child, as ſoon as ever it is in danger, you ſhall not need to tell him, and ſay, when you are in danger you muſt go to your father or mother, nature tells him ſo: ſo it is with a gracious heart, as ſoon as it is in any trouble or affliction, there is a new nature that doth carry him to the Covenant preſently, and there it finds eaſe and reſt: and if you find that your hearts do thus work, preſently to be running to the Covenant, it is an excellent ſign of the truth of grace: that is for the general.

But now for particular Promiſes in the Covenant of Grace. A gracious heart looks upon every Promiſe, as coming from the Root of the great Covenant of Grace in Chriſt. Other men look upon ſome particular Promiſes, that God will help them in ſtraights, and keep them and the like; but they look not upon the connexion of ſuch particular Promiſes, to the root, the Covenant of Grace: Now Chriſtians do miſs of a great deal of comfort they might have from the particular Promiſes in the Goſpel, if they'd look upon their connexion to the root, the great Covenant that God hath made with them in Chriſt. Now I remember I ſpake a little about that, that in outward promiſes in time of the Law, they might reſt more upon them, than we can in the time of the Goſpel. I gave you the reaſon why we, that live in the time of the Goſpel, cannot reſt ſo fully, for a literal performance of outward promiſes

promiſes that we meet withall in the old Teſtament, as they might in the time of the Law: for there was a ſpecial Covenant, that God pleaſed to call a new Covenant by way of diſtinction from the other Covenant, that is made with us in Chriſt for eternal life: And ſo even the Law was given to them in a more peculiar way for an external Covenant of outward bleſſings in the Land of Canaan, and ſo God did deal with them in a more external Covenant, than he doth now with his people. Yet godlineſs, hath the promiſe of this life, and that which is to come. We may make uſe of the promiſes for this life, but yet not ſo much to reſt upon the litteral performance of them as they might; but that God will make them good ſome way or other, in a ſpiritual way, if not in an outward way. We muſt lay no more upon outward promiſes than this, and therefore if we will lay more, we make the promiſe to bear more than it will bear out. For to give ſome inſtance; To believe fully and confidently, that the plague ſhall not come nigh ſuch a houſe, (I ſay) it is to lay more upon ſuch a promiſe than it will bear. I opened that promiſe in *Pſal.* 91. Now if I had lived in the time of the Law, perhaps I might have been ſomewhat more confident of the litteral performance of the promiſe, than I can now in the time of the Goſpel, the promiſe now bears no more than this, That God hath a ſpecial protection over his people, and that he will deliver them from the evil of ſuch an affliction, and if it doth bring ſuch an affliction, it is more than an ordinary providence, it is ſome eſpecial providence that God hath in it. I had thought to have given you divers promiſes for the Contentment of the heart in the time of affliction: *Iſa.* 43. 2. *when thou paſſeſt through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee; when thou walkeſt through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt, neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee.* Certainly, though this promiſe was made in the time of the Law, yet it will be made good to all the Saints now, one way or other, either in the letter, or ſome other way. For ſo we find it plainly, that promiſe that was made to *Joſhua*, *I will not fail thee, nor forſake thee, Joſhua* 1. 5. It is applied to the Chriſtians in the time of the Goſpel. So that here is the way of Faith, in bringing Contentment by the promiſes, that all the promiſes that ever were made to our forefathers from the beginning of the World, the Saints of God have an intereſt in them, they are their inheritances, and ſo goes on from one generation to another, and by that they come to have Contentment, becauſe they do inherit all the promiſes made in all the books of God; So *Hebr.* 13. 5. ſhews plainly, that it is our inheritance, and we do not inherit leſs now, than they did in *Joſhua's* time, but we inherit more, for you ſhall find in that place of the *Hebrews*, there is more ſaid, than is to *Joſhua*; to *Joſhua* God ſaith, He will not leave him, nor forſake him; now in that place of the *Hebrews*, in the Greek there is five negatives, *I will not, not, not, not, not* again, there is the elegancy of it very much, in the Greek I ſay, there are five negatives in that little ſentence; as if God ſhould ſay, I will not leave you, no, I will not, I will not, I will not, with ſuch earneſtneſs five times together: So that we have not onely the ſame promiſes that they had, but we have them more enlarged and more full, though ſtill not ſo much in the litteral ſenſe, for that indeed is the leaſt part of the promiſe, in

Eſa.

*Isa.*54.17. there God made a promise, *that no weapon formed against his people should prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against them in judgement thou shalt condemn,* (mark what follows.) *This is the heritage of the Servants of the Lord, and their righteousnes is of me, saith the Lord:* this is a good promise for a Souldier, though still not to lay too much upon the litteral sense: True, it holds forth thus much, that Gods protection is in an especial manner over Souldiers that are godly, *And every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgement, thou shalt condemn:* and this is against false witness too: Oh you, that your friends never left you any thing, you will say, my friends died and left not me a groat, but I thank God, God hath provided for me; But though thy Father and Mother died and left thee no heritage, yet thou hast a heritage in the promise, *This is the heritage.* So that there is no godly man or woman, but is a great Heir. Therefore when thou lookest into the book of God, and findest any promise there, thou mayest make that thine own. Just as an Heir that rides over divers fields and meadows, saith he, This meadow is my heritage, and this Corn-field is my heritage; and then he sees a fair a house, and, saith he, this fair house is my heritage; and he looks upon them with another manner of eye than a stranger that shall ride over those fields. So a carnal heart reads the promises, and reads them but meerly as stories, not that they have any great interest in them: But a godly man every time he reads the Scriptures (remember this Note when you are reading the Scripture) and there meeteth with a promise, he ought to lay his hand upon it, and say, this is a part of my heritage, it is mine, and I am to live upon it; and this will make you to be contented. Here is a Mysterious way of Contentment, So in *Psal.*34.10.and 37.6. there is divers other promises that brings Contentment. In *Isa.*58.10. And thus much for the Mysterie of Contentment by way of the Covenant.

There is two or three things more that shew, how a godly man hath Contentment after another kind of way than any carnal heart in the World hath, it is a Mysterious way, as thus,

He hath Contentment by realizing the glorious things of Heaven to him, he hath the Kingdom of Heaven as present, and the glorie that is to come, by Faith he makes it as present. So the Martyrs, they had Contentment in their sufferings, for said some of them, Though we have but a hard break-fast, yet we shall have a good dinner, we shall presently be in Heaven; do but shut your eyes (saith one) and you shall be in Heaven presently. *2.Cor.*4.16. *We faint not* (saith the Apostle) Why? *Because these light afflictions that are but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glorie.* They see Heaven before them, and that contents them. You Marriners, when you can see the haven before you, though you were mightily troubled before you could see any Land, yet when you come nigh the shore and can see such a Land-mark, that contents you exceedingly: a godly man in the middest of the waves, and storms that he meets withal, he can see the glorie of heaven before him, and so contents himself; one drop of the sweetnes of Heaven, is enough to take away all the sower and bitter of all the afflictions in the world: Indeed here we know that one drop of sower, or one drop of gall will make

bitter

bitter a great deal of honey, put a ſpoonfull of ſugar into a cup of gall or wormwood, that will not ſweeten it, but if you put a ſpoonfull of gall into a cup of ſugar it will imbitter that; now it is otherwiſe in Heaven, one drop of ſweet will ſweeten a great deal of ſower affliction, but a great deal of ſower and gall will not imbitter a ſoul that ſees the glorie of Heaven that is to come: now a carnal heart hath no Contentment but from what he ſees before him in this World, but a godly heart hath Contentment from that that he ſees laid up for him in the higheſt Heavens.

The laſt thing that I would name is this, *A godly man hath Contentment by opening and letting out of his heart to God:* other men or women they are diſcontented, but how do they help themſelves? by railing, by ill language, ſuch a one croſſes them, and they have no way to help themſelves but by railing, and by bitter words, and ſo they eaſe themſelves that way when they are angry, but a godly man when he is croſt, how doth he eaſe himſelf? he is ſenſible of his croſs as well as you, and he goes to God in prayer, and there he opens his heart to God, and lets out his ſorrows and fears, and then can come away with a joyfull countenance; now do you find that you can come away from prayer and not look ſad? As it is ſaid (in 1. *Sam.* 1. 18. of *Hannah*, that when ſhe had been at prayer her countenance was no more ſad, there ſhe was comforted; and this is the right way of Contentment. Thus we have done with the Myſtery of Contentment. Now if you can but put theſe things together that we have ſpoken of, you may ſee fully what an Art Chriſtian Contentment is: *Paul* had need learn it; you ſee Contentment is not ſuch a poor buſineſs as many make it, to ſay, you muſt be content, &c. But it is a great Art and Myſtery of godlineſs to be contented in the way of a Chriſtian, and it will appear yet further to be a Myſtery, when we come to the third Head; and that's to ſhew what thoſe leſſons are that a gracious heart doth learn when it learns to be contented. I have learn'd to be contented; *Learn'd*, what leſſons have you learn'd? As now a Scholar that hath great learning and underſtanding in Arts and Sciences, how did he begin it? he began (as we uſe to ſay) his A. B. C. and then afterwards he came to his Teſtament and Bible, and Accidence, and ſo to his Grammar, and afterwards to his other books; ſo he learn'd one thing after another: So a Chriſtian coming to Contentment is as a Scholar in Chriſts School, and there are divers leſſons to teach the Soul to bring it to this learning: every godly man or woman is a Scholar, it cannot be ſaid of any Chriſtian that he is illiterate, but he is litterate, a learned man, a learned woman: now the leſſons that Chriſt teaches, to bring us to Contentment, are theſe:

The firſt great leſſon is, The leſſon of *Self-denial:* and though it be a great leſſon and hard; as you know a child at firſt cries, It is hard. It is that that I remember *Bradford* the Martyr ſaith, *Whoſoever hath not learned the leſſon of the Croſs, hath not learned his A. B. C. in Chriſtianity.* Here Chriſt begins with his Scholars, yea, thoſe in the loweſt form muſt begin with this; if you mean to be Chriſtians at all, you muſt buckle to this or you can never be Chriſtians: There is none can be a Scholar, except he doth learn his A. B. C. ſo thou muſt learn the leſſon of Self-denial, or thou canſt never come to be a Scholar in

Chriſts

Christs School, to be learned in this Mystery of Contentment: That is the first lesson that Christ teaches any soul: Oh Self-denial, that brings Contentment, that brings down and softens a mans heart; a thing (you know) that is soft, if you strike upon it, it makes no noise, but if you strike upon a hard thing, it makes a noise; so the hearts of men that are full of themselves, and hardened with self-love, if they have any stroke, they make a noise; but a self-denying Christian yields to Gods hand, and makes no noise; as when you strike upon a woolsack it makes no noise, because it yields to the stroke; So a self-denying heart yields to the stroke, and thereby comes to this Contentment. Now in this lesson of Self-denial there are divers things: I will not enter into the Doctrine of Self-denial, but onely shew you how Christ teaches Self-denial, and how that brings Contentment.

First, *Such an one learns to know that he is nothing*, he comes to this, to be able to say, Well, I see I am nothing in my self, now that a man or woman, which indeed knows that he or shee is nothing, and hath learned it throughly, will be able to bear any thing: The way to be able to bear any thing, it is to know our selves to be nothing in our selves. Saith God to us, *Wilt thou set thine heart upon that which is nothing? Prov.* 23. 5. speaking of riches; Why blessed God dost not thou do so? thou hast set thy heart upon us, and yet we are nothing. God would not have us set our hearts upon riches because they are nothing, and yet God is pleased to set his heart upon us, and yet we are nothing, that's Gods grace, free grace, and therefore it is no great matter what I suffer for I am as nothing.

Secondly, *I deserve nothing*. I am nothing, and I deserve nothing; suppose I have not this and that that others have, I am sure I deserve nothing except it be Hell: you will answer any of your servants so that is not content, I mervail what you deserve? or your children, Do you deserve it that you are so eager upon it? you think to stop their mouths thus; so we may easily stop our own mouths, we deserve nothing, and therefore why should we be impatient if we have not what we desire, if we had deserved any thing, we might have some trouble of spirit, as a man that hath deserved well of the State, or of his friends, and he finds not an answerable incouragement, it troubles him mightily, but if he be conscious to himself that he hath deserved nothing, he is content with a repulse.

Thirdly, *I can do nothing, without me you can do nothing*, saith Christ, *Joh.* 15. 5. Why should I stand much upon it to be troubled and discontented if I have not this and that, when the truth is, I can do nothing? If you should come to one that is angry because he hath not such diet as he desires, and is discontented with it, you will answer him, I mervail what you do, what use you are of? Shall one that will sit still and be of no use, yet for all that he must have all the supply that possibly he can desire? Do but consider of what use you are in the World; if you consider what little need God hath of you, and what little use you are of, you will not be much discontented: If you have learned this lesson of Self-denial, though God doth cut you short of such and such comforts, yet since that I do but little, why should I have much? This very thought will bring down a mans spirit as much as any thing.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, *So vile I am, that I can receive no good neither of my self*; I am not onely an empty veſſel, but a corrupt and unclean veſſel that would ſpoil any thing that comes into it. So are all our hearts, every one of our hearts is not onely empty of good, but are like a muſty veſſel, that if any good liquor be powred into it, it ſpoils it.

Fifthly, If God doth cleanſe us in ſome meaſure, and doth put into us ſome good liquor, ſome grace of his Spirit, yet, *We can make uſe of nothing, neither when we have it, if God doth but withdraw himſelf*: If God doth but leave us one moment, after he hath beſtowed upon us the greateſt gifts, and whatſoever abilities we can deſire, if God ſhould ſay, I will give you them, now go, and trade now I have given you theſe and theſe abilities, we cannot ſtir one foot further neither if God doth but leave us. Doth God give us gifts and parts? Then let us fear and tremble leſt God ſhould leave us to our ſelves, for then how foully ſhould we abuſe thoſe gifts and parts? You think other men and women have Memory, and gifts, and parts, and you would fain have them; But ſuppoſe God ſhould give you theſe and there leave you, you would utterly ſpoil them.

Sixtly, *We are worſe than nothing*. For by ſin we come to be a great deal worſe than nothing; ſin makes us more vile than nothing, ſin makes us contrarie to all good: now it is a great deal worſe to have a contrarie to all that is good, than meerly to have an emptineſs of all that is good; we are not empty pitchers in reſpect of good, but we are like pitchers fill'd with poiſon, and is it much for ſuch as we are to be cut ſhort of outward comforts?

In the ſeventh place, *If we periſh there will be no loſs of us*. If God ſhould annihilate me, what loſs would there be of me? God can raiſe up another in my place, to do him other manner of ſervice than I have done. Now put but theſe ſeven things together and then hath Chriſt taught you Self-denial: I may call theſe the ſeveral words in our Leſſon of Self-denial; Chriſt teaches the ſoul this, ſo that as in the preſence of God, upon a real ſight of its ſelf, it can ſay, Lord I am nothing, Lord I deſerve nothing, Lord I can do nothing, I can receive nothing, I can make uſe of nothing, I am worſe than nothing, and if I come to nothing and periſh, there will be no loſs at all of me, and therefore what great matter is it for me to be cut ſhort here? A man that is little in his own eyes, ſuch a man or woman will account every affliction to be little, and every mercie to be great: *Saul*, There was a time (the Scripture ſaith) that he was little in his own eyes, and then his afflictions were but little to him, when ſome would not have had him to be King, but ſpake contemptuouſly of him, he held his peace; but when *Saul* began to be big in his own eyes, then the affliction began to be great upon him. *There was never any ſuch contented man or woman, as this ſelf-denying man or woman*: There was never any denied himſelf ſo much as Jeſus Chriſt did, he gave his cheeks to the ſmiters, he opened not his mouth, he was as a lamb when he was led to the ſlaughter, he made no noiſe in the ſtreet, Oh he denied himſelf above all, and was willing to empty himſelf; and ſo he was the moſt contented that ever any was in the World, and the nearer we come to learn to deny our ſelves as Chriſt did, the more contented ſhall we be, and by knowing much of our own vile-

vileneſs, we come to learn to juſtifie God, whatever the Lord ſhall lay upon us, yet, righteous is the Lord, for he hath to deal with a moſt wretched creature. A diſcontented heart he is troubled becauſe he hath no more comfort; but one that is a ſelf-denying man, he rather wonders that he hath ſo much as he hath: Oh ſaith one, I have but a little; I but ſaith he that hath learned his Leſſon of Self-deniall, I rather wonder that God beſtows upon me the liberty of breathing in the air, knowing how vile I am, and knowing how much ſin the Lord doth ſee in me: And that's the way of Contenment, by learning Self-denial

Eightly, There is a further thing in Self-deniall which brings Contentment, *Becauſe thereby the ſoul comes to rejoyce, and take ſatisfaction in all Gods waies*, (I beſeech you obſerve this) If a man be ſelviſh, and have ſelf-love prevail in his heart, thoſe things that ſuits with his own ends, he will be glad of them, but a godly man that hath denied himſelf he will ſuit with, and be glad of all things that ſhall ſuit with Gods ends: Saith a gracious heart, Gods Ends are my Ends, and I have denied mine own ends, and ſo he comes to find Contentment in all Gods Ends and Waies, and his comforts are multiplied, whereas the comforts of other men are ſingle, it's but very rare that Gods waies ſhall ſuit with a mans particular end, but always Gods ways ſuit with his own ends; now if you will onely have Contentment when Gods ways ſuits with your own ends, you can have it but now and then, but a ſelf-denying man denies his own ends, and onely looks at the ends of God, and therein is contented: When a man is ſelviſh, he cannot but have a great deal of trouble and vexation, for if I regard my ſelf, my ends are ſo narrow, that I ſhall have a hundred things will come and juſſel me, and I cannot have room in thoſe narrow ends of mine own; as you know in the City what a deal of ſtir there is in narrow ſtreets, as Thames ſtreet being ſo narrow, they juſſel, and wrangle, and fight one with another, becauſe the place is ſo narrow, but now in the broad ſtreets there they can go quietly; ſo men that are ſelviſh they meet & ſo juſſel one with another, one man is for ſelf in one thing, and another man is for ſelf in another thing, and ſo they make a great deal of ſtir; but thoſe whoſe hearts are enlarged, and make publick things their ends, and can deny themſelves, they can walk at breadth, and never juſſel one with another ſo as the other do. The Leſſon of Self-deniall is the firſt Leſſon that Jeſus Chriſt doth learn men in the ſeeking of Contentment.

The ſecond Leſſon is, *The vanity of the Creature.* That's the ſecond Leſſon in Chriſts School, that he teaches thoſe that he would make Scholars in this Art: The vanity of the Creature, That whatſoever there is in the creature hath an emptineſs in it, *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity*, that's the Leſſon that the Wiſeman learn'd, that the creature in its ſelf can do us neither good nor hurt, but it is all but as wind, there is nothing in the Creature that is ſuitable to a gracious heart to feed upon for the good and happineſs of it: My Brethren, the reaſon why you have not Contentment in the things of the world, it is not becauſe you have not enough of them, that's not the reaſon, but the reaſon is, Becauſe they are not things proportionable to that immortall ſoul of yours that is capable of God Himſelf; many men think when they are troubled and

have not Contentment, that it is, becauſe they have but little in the world and if they had more, then they ſhould be content: That were juſt thus, Suppoſe a man is an hungrie, and to ſatisfie his craving ſtomach, he ſhould gape and hold open his mouth to take in the wind, and then ſhould think the reaſon, why he is not ſatisfied, is, becauſe he hath not enough of the wind; no, the reaſon is, becauſe the thing is not ſuitable to a craving ſtomach: Truly there is the ſame madneſs in the world; the wind that a man takes in by gaping, will as ſoon ſatisfie a craving ſtomach, which is readie to famiſh, as all the comforts in the world can ſatisfie a ſoul that knows what true happineſs means. You would be happie, and you ſeek after ſuch and ſuch comforts in the Creature; well, have you got them? do you find your hearts ſatisfied as having that happineſs that is ſuitable to you? No, no, it is not here, but you think it is, becauſe you want ſuch and ſuch things: O poor deluded man! It is not becauſe you have not enough of it, but becauſe it is not the thing that is proportionable to that immortal ſoul that God hath given you. *Why do you lay out your money for that which is not bread* (Iſa. 55.2.) *and your labour for that which ſatisfieth not?* You are mad people, you ſeek to ſatisfie your ſtomachs with that that is not bread, you follow the wind, you will never have Contentment, all Creatures in the world ſay, Contentment is not in us, Riches ſaith, Contentment is not in me; Pleaſure ſaith, Contentment is not in me; if you look for Contentment in the Creature you will fail; No, Contentment is higher: When thou comeſt into the School of Chriſt, Chriſt teaches thee, that there is a vanitie in all things in the world, and the ſoul that by coming into the School of Chriſt, by underſtanding the glorious Myſteries of the Goſpel, comes to ſee the vanitie of all things in the world, that's the ſoul that comes to true Contentment. I could tell you of abundance of ſentences from Heathens, that ſhews the vanitie of all things in the world, and yet they did not learn the vanitie of the Creature in the right School. But now when a ſoul comes into the School of Jeſus Chriſt, and there comes to ſee a vanitie in all things in the world, then ſuch a ſoul comes to have Contentment. If you ſeek Contentment elſewhere, you do like the unclean ſpirit, ſeek for reſt but find none.

A third Leſſon that Chriſt teaches a Chriſtian, when he comes into his School, is this, *He learns him to underſtand what that One thing is that is neceſſarie, which he never came to underſtand before:* you know what he ſaid to *Martha*, O Martha, *thou cumbereſt thy ſelf about many things, but there is one thing neceſſarie.* The ſoul before ſought after this, and the other thing, but now ſaith the ſoul, I ſee really that it is not neceſſarie that I ſhould be rich, but it is neceſſarie that I ſhould make up my peace with God; it is not neceſſarie that I ſhould live a pleaſurable life in this world, but it is abſolutely neceſſarie that I ſhould have pardon of my ſin; it is not neceſſarie that I ſhould have honour and preferment, but it is neceſſarie that I ſhould have God to be my portion, and have my part in Jeſus Chriſt; it is neceſſarie that my ſoul ſhould be ſaved in the day of Jeſus Chriſt; the other things are prettie fine things indeed, and I ſhould be glad if God would give them me, a fine habitation, and comings in, and clothes, and promotion for my wife and children, theſe are comfortable things, but theſe are not the neceſſarie things, I may have theſe, and yet periſh

rish for ever, but the other is absolutely necessarie; no matter though I be poor, so be it I may have that that is absolutely necessarie; thus Christ instructs the soul. There's many of you have had some thoughts about this that it is indeed necessarie for you to provide for your souls, but when you come into Christs School, there Christ causes the fear of eternitie to fall upon you, and there he causes such a real sight of the great things of eternitie, and the absolute necessitie of those things, that possesses your hearts with fear, and that takes you off from all other things in the world. Now I should have shewn you how that will bring Contentment to the soul, when it comes to be instructed in the thing that is absolutely necessarie; but thus much for this time.

Sermon V.

Philippians 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

I Mentioned Three Lessons, the last time, that Christ teaches those Scholars that comes into his School, whereby they might come to get Contentment.

First, The Lesson of Self-denial.

Secondly, The Lesson of the Vanitie of the Creature.

Thirdly, The right understanding of that One thing that is necessarie. A little to enlarge this one, and so to proceed to others.

It is said of *Pompey*, that when he was to carrie Corn to *Rome* in time of Dearth, he was in a great deal of danger by storms at Sea; but, saith he, we must go on, it is necessary that *Rome* should be relieved, but it is not necessarie that we should live. So it would be, certainly, when the soul is taken up with the things that are of absolute necessitie, it will not be much troubled about other things. What are the things that do disquiet us here, but some by-matters in this world? and it is, because our hearts are not taken up with that One Absolute Necessarie thing: Who are the men that are most discontented? but idle persons, that have nothing to take up their minds? every little thing disquiets and discontents them: But now a man that hath businesse of great weight and consequence, if all things goes well with his great businesse that is in his head, he is not sensible of meaner things in the familie; but now a man that lies at home, and hath nothing to do, he finds fault with every thing:

So it is with the heart; when the heart of a man hath nothing to do but to be busie about Creature-comforts, every little thing troubles him; but now, when the heart is taken up with the weightie thoughts of Eternitie, the great things of Eternal Life, the heart being taken up with them, these things that are here below, that did disquiet it before, are things now of no consideration with him, in comparison to the other, so as how things fall out here is not much regarded with him, if the *One thing that is Necessarie* be provided for.

The Fourth Lesson that the Soul is instructed in, to come to this knowledge in the Art of Contentment, is this: *The soul comes to understand in what relation it stands in here to the world:* by that I mean thus, *God comes to instruct the soul effectually through Christ by his Spirit, upon what terms it lives here in the world, in what relation it is that it doth stand:* as thus, While I live in the world, my condition is to be but a pilgrim, a stranger, a traveller, and a souldier: Now the right understanding of this, and being taught this, not onely by rote, that I can speak the words over, but when I come indeed, to have my soul possest with the Consideration of this truth, That God hath set me in this world, not as in my home, but as a meer stranger and pilgrime, that I am travelling here to another home, that I am here a souldier in my warfare; it is a mightie help to Contentment in whatsoever befals one: as now to instance in all these conditions. When a man is at home, if he hath not things according to his desire, he will be finding fault, and is not contented; but if a man travels abroad, perhaps he meets not with conveniences as he desires, the servants in the house are not at his beck, or are not so diligent as his own servants were, and his diet is not as at home, and his bed not as at home, yet this very thought may moderate a mans spirit, I am a Traveller, and I must not be finding fault, I am but in another mans house, and it were not manners for one to find fault when he is abroad in another bodies familie, though things be not so as in my own familie; If a man meets with ill weather he must be content, it is Travellers fare (we use to say) both fair weather and foul weather, this is the common Travellers fare, and we must be content with it; but if a man were at home, and it should drop down in his house, he would account it an ill thing, an affliction to him, and he cannot bear it: but when he is travelling abroad, though he meet with rain and storms, he is not so much troubled: When you are abroad at Sea, though you have not those many things that you have at home, you are not troubled at it, you are contented; why? you are abroad at Sea, you are not troubled at storms that do arise, and though you may have many things otherwise than you would have them at home, but still you are quieted with that, you are at Sea. Marriners when they are at Sea, they care not what clothes they have then, though they be pitch'd and tarr'd, and but a clout about their neck, and any mean clothes, but they think when they come home, then they shall have their fine silk stockings, and brave suits, and lac'd bands, and such things, & shall be very fine; & so they are contented abroad upon that thought, that it shall be otherwise with them when they come home, and though they have nothing but salt meat, and a little hard fare, yet when they come to their houses, then they shall have any thing: Thus it should be with us in this world:

world: the truth is, we are all in this world but as Sea-faring men, toſt up and down on the waves of the Sea of this world, and our Haven is Heaven, and we are here travelling, but our home is another world, that long home. Indeed ſome men have better accommodations than others have in travelling; it's true, it's a great mercie of God to us in *England*, in that we can travel with ſuch delight and accommodations, more than they can in other Countreys; and through Gods mercie we have as great accommodations in our travelling to Heaven in *England*, as any place under Heaven hath, but yet though we do meet with travellers fare ſometimes, yet it ſhould not be grievous to us: The Scripture tells us plainly, that we muſt behave our ſelves here but as Pilgrims and ſtrangers. In 1. *Pet.* 2. 11. *Dearly beloved, I beſeech you as ſtrangers and pilgrims, abſtain from fleſhly luſts, which war againſt the Soul:* Conſider what your condition is, you are pilgrims and ſtrangers, do not think to ſatisfie your ſelves here. A man when he comes into an Inn, If there be but a fair cup-board of plate, he is not troubled that it is not his own, Why? Becauſe he is going away; ſo let us not be troubled when we ſee other men have great eſtates, but we have not, Why? We are going away into another Countrey, you are lodging here but as it were for a night; if you ſhould live an hundred years in compariſon of eternitie, it is not ſo much as a night, it is but as you were travelling, and were come into an Inn: And were not this a madneſs for a man to be diſcontent becauſe he hath not what he ſees there, ſeeing it may be he is to go away again within half a quarter of an hour? So you find it in *David*, this was the argument that brought off *Davids* heart from the things of this world, and ſet him upon other manner of things, *Pſalm* 119. 19. *I am a ſtranger in the earth, hide not thy commandments from me:* I am a ſtranger in the earth, (what then?) then Lord let me have the knowledge of thy Commandments and it's ſufficient, as for the things of the earth, I ſtand not upon them whether I have much or little, but hide not thy Commandments from me, Lord let me know the rule that I ſhould guid my life by.

Again, We are not onely Travellers but Souldiers', this is the condition of the life in which we are here in this world, and therefore we are to behave our ſelves accordingly. So the Apoſtle makes uſe of this Argument in writing unto *Timothie*, 2. Tim. 2. 3. *Thou therefore endure hardneſs as a good Souldier of Jeſus Chriſt.* The very thought of the condition of a man that is a Souldier, doth ſtill his diſquiet of heart: when he is abroad, he hath not that accommodations in his quarters, as he hath in his own familie; perhaps a man that had his bed & curtains drawn about him, and all accommodations in his chamber; now perhaps ſometime he muſt be put to lie upon ſtraw, & he thinketh with himſelf, I am a Souldier, & it is ſuitable to my condition: he muſt have his bed warm'd at home, but he muſt lie abroad in the fields when he is a Souldier; and the very thought of this condition, in which he ſtands, quiets him in all things, yea, and he goes rejoycing, to think, this is but ſuitable to my condition in which God hath put me: So it ſhould be with us in reſpect of this world. Now, would it not be an unſeemly thing to ſee a Souldier go whyning up and down with the finger in the eye, and complaining, that he hath not hot meat every meal, and his bed warm'd as he had at home? Now Chriſtians

they know that they are in their warfare, they are here in this world fighting and combating with the enemies of their souls and eternal condition, and they must be willing to endure hardness here. The right understanding of this, that God hath put them into such a condition, it is that that will content them, especially when they consider, that they are certain of the victorie, and that ere long they shall triumph with Jesus Christ, and then all their sorrows shall be done away, and their tears wiped from their eyes. A Souldier is contrent to endure hardness, though he knows not that he shall have the victorie: but a Christian knows himself to be a Souldier, and knows that he shall conquer and triumph with Jesus Christ to all eternitie. And that's the fourth lesson that Christ doth teach the soul, when he brings it into his School to learn the Art of Contentment, he makes them understand throughly the relation in which he hath placed him in in this world.

The Fifth Lesson that Christ teaches, it is this, *He teacheth us wherein consists any good that is to be enjoyed in any creature in the world.* It's true, before it hath been taught, that there is a vanitie in the Creature, that is, take the Creature considered in its self; but yet though there be a vanitie in the Creature in its self, in respect of satisfying the soul for its portion, yet there is some goodness in the Creature, though there be a vanitie, there is some desireableness: but wherein doth that consist? It consists not in the nature of the Creature it self, for that is nothing but vanitie; but it consists in the reference it hath to the first-being of all things. This is a Lesson that Christ teaches, If there be any good in an estate, or in any comforts in this world, it is not so much that it pleases my sence, that it is suitable to my bodie, but the reference it hath to God the First-being, that by these creatures, there should be somewhat of Gods goodness conveyed to me, and I may have a sanctified use of the Creature to draw me nearer to God, and that I enjoy more of God, & be made more serviceable for the Glorie of God in the place where God hath set me, here's the good of the Creature; Oh were we but instructed in this Lesson, did we but understand, and throughly believe this to be a truth, that there is no creature in all the world hath any goodness in it any further than it hath reference to the first infinite SupreamGood of all, that so far as I can enjoy God in it, so farre it is good to me, and so farre as I do not enjoy God in it, so far there is no goodness in any thing that I have in the Creature, how easie were it then for one to be contented; as thus, Suppose a man had a great estate but a few years ago, & now it is all gone, I would but appeal to this man, When you had your estate, wherein did you account the good of that estate to consist? a carnal heart would say, any bodie might know that; that it brought me in so much a year, & that I could fare of the best, & be a man of repute in place where I live, & men would regard what I said, I might be cloathed as I would, and lay up portions for my children, in this consisted the good of my estate; this man now never came into the School of Christ to know wherein the good of an estate did consist, no mervail if he be disquieted when he hath lost his estate: But now a Christian that hath been in the School of Christ, and hath been instructed in the Art of Contentment, when such a one hath an estate, he thinks, in that I have an estate above my brethren, in this consists

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the good of it to me, in that I have an opportunity to serve God the better, and I enjoy a great deal of Gods mercy to my soul conveyed to me through the Creature, and hereby I am enabled to do a great deal of good, and therein I account the good of my estate. Now God hath taken this away from me, now if God will be pleased to make up the enjoyment of himself another way; that is, will call me to honour him by suffering, and if I may do God as much service now in my way of suffering, that is, to shew forth the Grace of his Spirit in the way of my suffering, as I did in the way of prosperity, I have as much of God as I had before; if I may be led to God in my low condition, as much as I was in my prosperous condition, I have as much Comfort and Contentment as I had before.

Obj. But you will say, *It's true, If I could honour God in my low estate as much as in my prosperous estate, then it were somewhat; but how can that be?*

Answ. You must know, the special honour that God hath from his Creatures in this world, it is, The manifestation of the Graces of his Spirit; It's true, God hath a great deal of honour when a man is in a Publick place, and so he is able to do a great deal of good, To countenance Godliness, and discountenance Sin; but the main thing is, *In our shewing forth the virtues of him that hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.* Now if I can say, That through Gods mercy in my affliction, I find the Graces of Gods Spirit working as strongly in me, as ever they did when I had my estate, I am where I was, yea, I am fully in as good a condition; for I have that good now that I had in my prosperous estate, for I accounted the good of it, but in my enjoyment of God, and honouring of God, and now God hath blest the want of it to stir up the Graces of his Spirit in my Soul, and this is the work that now God calls me to; and I must account God is most honoured, when I do the work that he calls me to; He set me a work in my prosperous estate at that time, to honour him in that condition; and now he sets me a work at this time, to honour him in this condition: Now God is most honoured, when I can turn from one condition to another according as he calls me to it: Would you account your selves to be honoured by your servants, when you set them about a work that hath some excellency, and they will go on, and on, and you cannot get them off from it? Now let the work be never so good, yet if you will call them off to another work, you do expect that they should manifest so much respect to you, as to be content to come off from that, though they be set about a meaner work, if it be more suitable to your ends. So, you were in a prosperous estate, and there God called you to some service that you took some pleasure in; but suppose God saith, I will use you in a suffering condition, and I will have you honour me in that way; now here's the honouring of God that you can turn this way or that way, as God calls you to it; thus now you having learned this, That the good of the Creature consists in the enjoyment of God in it, and the honouring of God by it, you can be content, because you have the same good that you had before, And that's the Fifth Lesson.

The Sixth Lesson that Christ doth teach the soul, that he brings into this School, is this; *He doth instruct such a man or woman in the knowledge of their own hearts:* you must learn this or you will never learn Content-

ment; you muſt learn to know your own hearts well, to be good ſtudents of your own hearts; you cannot all be Scholars in the Arts and Sciences in the world, but you may all be ſtudents in your own hearts; you cannot read in the book (many of you) but God expects that every day you ſhould turn over a leaf in your own hearts; you will never come to get any ſkill in this Myſterie, except you ſtudie the book of your own hearts: Marriners, they have their books that they ſtudie, thoſe that will be good Navigatours; and Scholars they have their books; thoſe that ſtudie Logick, they have their books according to that; and thoſe that would ſtudie Rhetorick and Philoſophie, have their books according to that; and thoſe that ſtudie Divinitie, they have their books, whereby they come to be helped in the ſtudie of Divinitie: but a Chriſtian (next to the book of God) is to look into the book of his own heart, and to read over that, and this will help you to Contentment theſe three ways:

1. By the ſtudying of thy *heart*, thou wilt come preſently *to discover wherein thy discontent lies*; when thou art discontented, thou wilt find out the root of any discontentment, if thou doſt ſtudie thy heart well: many men and women are discontented, and the truth is, they know not wherefore, they think this, and the other thing is the cauſe, but a man or woman that knows their own heart, they will find out preſently where the root of their discontent lies, that it lies in ſuch a corruption, and diſtemper of my heart, that now through Gods mercie I have found out; It is in this caſe, as it is with a little child that is very froward in the houſe, if a ſtranger comes in, he doth not know what the matter is, perhaps the ſtranger will give the child a Rattle, or a Nut, or ſuch a thing to quiet it, but when the Nurſe comes, ſhe knows the temper and diſpoſition of the Child, and therefore knows the beſt how to quiet it: So it is here juſt thus for all the world, when we are ſtrangers with our own hearts, we are mightily discontented, and know not how to quiet our ſelves, becauſe we know not where the diſquiet lieth: And indeed when we are ſtrangers to our own hearts we cannot tell how to quiet our ſelves; but if we be very well vers'd in our own hearts, when any thing fall out ſo as to diſquiet us, we find out the cauſe of it preſently, and ſo quickly come to be quiet. So a man that hath a Watch, and he underſtands the uſe of every wheel and pin, if it goes amiſs he will preſently find out the cauſe of it: but one that hath no ſkill in a Watch, when it goes amiſs he knows not what the matter is, and therefore cannot mend it. So indeed our hearts are as a Watch, and there are many wheels, and windings, and turnings there, and we ſhould labour to know our hearts well, that when they are out of tune, we may know what the matter is.

2. This knowledge of our hearts will help us to Contentment, becauſe by this, *we ſhall come to know what is moſt ſuitable to our condition*. As thus, A man that knows not his own heart, he thinks not what need he hath of affliction, and upon that he is diſquieted; but that man or woman that hath ſtudied their own hearts, when God comes with afflictions upon them, they can ſay, I would not for any thing in the world have been without this affliction, God hath ſo ſuited this affliction to my condition, and hath come in ſuch a way, that if this affliction had not come, I am afraid I ſhould have fallen into ſin:

A poor ignorant man that takes phyſick, the phyſick works, and he thinks it will kill him, becauſe he knows not the ill humours that are in his body, and therefore he underſtands not how ſuitable the phyſick is to him; but a Phyſician takes a purge, and it makes him extreamly ſick, ſaith the Phyſician, I like this the better, it doth but work upon the humour that I know is the cauſe of my diſeaſe, and upon that ſuch a man, that hath knowledge and underſtanding of his body, and the cauſe of his diſtemper, he is not troubled or diſquieted: So would we be if we did but know the diſtempers of our own hearts; Carnal men and women they know not their own ſpirits, and therefore they fling and vex upon every affliction that doth befall them, they know not what diſtempers are in their hearts that may be healed by their afflictions, if it pleaſe God to give them a ſanctified uſe of them.

3. By knowing their own hearts, *they know what they are able to mannage*, and by this means they come to be content; the Lord (perhaps) takes away many comforts from them that they had before, or denies them ſome things that they hoped to have got; now they by knowing their hearts, know this, That they were not able to mannage ſuch an eſtate, and they were not able to mannage ſuch a proſperity, God ſaw it, and (ſaith a poor ſoul) I am in ſome meaſure convinc'd, by looking into mine own heart, that I was not able to mannage ſuch a condition. A man deſires greedily to gripe more perhaps than he is able to mannage, and ſo undoes himſelf: As Country men do obſerve, that if they over-ſtock their Land, it will quickly ſpoil them; and ſo a wiſe Husbandman that knows how much his ground will bear, he is not troubled that he hath not ſo much ſtock as others, why? becauſe he knows he hath not ground enough for ſo great a ſtock, and that quiets him: So many men and women that know not their own hearts, they would fain have a proſperous eſtate as others have, but if they knew their own hearts, they would know that they were not able to mannage it: If one of your little children of three or four years old ſhould be crying for the coat of her that is twelve or fourteen years old, and ſay, Why may not I have a coat as long as my Siſters? If ſhe had, it would ſoon trip up her heels, and break her face; but when the child comes to underſtanding, ſhe is not diſcontented, becauſe her coat is not ſo long as her ſiſters, but ſaith, my coat is fit for me, and therein takes content: So if we come to underſtanding in the School of Chriſt, we will not cry, Why have not I ſuch an eſtate as others have? the Lord ſees that I am not able to mannage it, and I ſee it my ſelf by the knowing of mine own heart. You ſhall have children, if they ſee but a knife, they will crie for it, becauſe they know not their ſtrength, and that they are not able to mannage it, but you know they are not able to mannage it, and therefore you will not give it them, and when they come to ſo much underſtanding as to know that they are not able to mannage it, they will not crie for it; ſo we would not crie for ſuch and ſuch things if we knew that we were not able to mannage them: when you vex and fret for what you have not, I may ſay to you as Chriſt ſaith, you know not of what ſpirits you are. It was a ſpeech of *Oecolampadius* to *Pavillus*, ſaith he (when they were ſpeaking about his extream poverty,) *Not ſo poor, though I have been very poor, yet I would be poorer, I could be willing to*

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be poorer than I am, for the truth is (as if he ſhould ſay) the Lord knew that that was more ſuitable to me, and I knew that my own heart was ſuch, that a poor condition was more ſuitable to me than a rich; ſo certainly would we ſay if we knew our own hearts, that ſuch and ſuch a condition is better for me, than if it had been otherwiſe.

The ſeventh leſſon, *Is the burden of a proſperous eſtate.* Such a one that comes into Chriſts School to be inſtructed in this Art, never comes to attain any great ſkill in this Art, untill he comes to underſtand the burden that is in a proſperous eſtate.

Object. You will ſay, What burden is there in a proſperous eſtate.

Anſw. Yes, certainly a great burden, and there needs a great ſtrength to bear it: as men had need have ſtrong brains that can bear ſtrong Wine; ſo they had need of ſtrong ſpirits that are able to bear proſperous conditions, and not to do themſelves hurt; there is a fourfold burden in a proſperous eſtate. Many men and women look at the ſhine and glittering of proſperity, but they little think of the burden, but there is a fourfold burden.

1. There is *A burden of trouble.* A Roſe hath its prickles; and ſo the Scripture ſaith, *That he that will be rich, pierceth himſelf through with many ſorrows*, 1. *Tim.* 6. 10. If a mans heart be ſet upon it that he muſt be rich, and he will be rich, ſuch a man will pierce himſelf through with many ſorrows; he looks upon the delight and glorie of riches that appears outwardly, but he conſiders not what piercing ſorrows he may meet withall in them: The conſideration of the trouble in a proſperous condition I have divers times thought of, and I cannot tell by what ſimilitude to expreſs it better, than by travelling in ſome champian Countrey, where round about is very fair and ſandy ground, and you ſee there a Town a great way off in a bottom, and you think, O how bravely is that Town ſeated! but when you come and ride into the Town, you ſhall ride through a dirty lane, and through a company of fearfull dirty holes, and you could not ſee the dirty lane and holes when you were two or three miles off: ſo ſometimes we look upon the proſperitie of men, and think ſuch a man lives bravely and comfortably, but if we did but know what troubles he meets withall in his family, in his eſtate, in his dealings with men, we would not think his condition ſo happy. One may have a very fine new ſhoo, but no body knows where it pinches him, but he who hath it on: ſo you think ſuch and ſuch men are happie, but they may have many troubles that you little think of.

2. *There is a burden of danger in it.* Men that are in a proſperous condition, they are in a great deal of danger: you ſee ſometimes in the evening, when you light up your candles, the Moths and the Gnats will be flying up & down in the candle, but they ſcorch their wings, and there they fall down dead; ſo there is a great deal of danger in a proſperous eſtate, thoſe men that are ſet upon a Pinacle on high, theſe men they are in greater danger than other men are. Honey we know doth invite Bees and Waſps unto it; and ſo the ſweet of proſperitie doth invite the Devil and temptation. Men that are in a proſperous eſtate, are ſubject to many temptations that other men are not ſubject to. The Scripture calls the Devil *Beelzebub*, that is, the god of Flies; and ſo

Beelzebub

Beelzebub comes where the honey of prosperitie is: They are in very great danger of temptation that are in a prosperous condition. The dangers of men that are in a prosperous estate, that have more than others, should be considered of by those that are lower; think with thy self, though they be above me, yet they are in more danger than I am; the tall trees are more shattered a great deal than low shrubs: so you know the ship that hath all the sails up, the top sail and all, in a storm this is in more danger than that that hath all the sails drawn in: And so men that have their Top gallant, and all up and brave, they are more like to be drown'd in perdition than other men are; and therefore you know what the Scripture saith, how hard it is for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of heaven: such a Text should make poor people to be contented with their estates. We have a notable example for that in the Children of *Kohath*, you shall find that they were in a more excellent estate than the other of the *Levites*, but they were in more danger than the other, and more trouble.

First, That the children of *Kohath* were in a higher condition than other of the *Levites*, that I'le shew you out of the 14. of *Numb.* 4. vers. there you shall find what their condition was. *This shal be the service of the sons of* Kohath *in the Tabernacle of the Congregation about the most holy things.* Mark, the *Levites* were exercised about *holy things*; but the Sons of *Kohath*, their service was about the *most holy things* of all: and you shall find in the 21. of *Joshua*, vers. 10. That God did honour the Sons of *Kohath* in a more special manner than he did honour the other *Levites*, which honour the Children of *Aaron* (being of the Families of the *Kohathites*, who were of the Children of *Levi*) had, for theirs was the first Lot, and they were prefer'd before the other families of *Levi*, those that were imployed in the most honourable imployment, they had the most honourable Lot, the first Lot fell to them: Thus you see God honoured the Children of the *Kohathites*. But (might other *Levites* say) how hath God prefer'd this family before us? They were honoured more than the other were: But now, mark their burden that comes with their honour, and that I will shew you out of two Scriptures, the first is, *Numb.* 7. 6, 7, 8, 9. *And* Moses *took the Wagons and Oxen, and gave them unto the* Levites: *Two Wagons and four Oxen he gave unto the Sons of* Gershom, *according to their service: and four Wagons and eight Oxen he gave unto the Sons of* Merari, *according unto their service, under the hand of* Ithamar *the son of* Aaron *the Priest.* But saith he, (vers. 9.) *unto the Sons of* Kohath *he gave none; because the service of the Sanctuary that belonged unto them, was, That they should bear upon their shoulders.* Mark, the other *Levites* had Oxen and Wagons given unto them, to ease them of their service: but (saith he) to the Sons of *Kohath* he gave none, but they should bear their service upon their shoulders; and that's the reason why God was so displeased, because that they would have more ease in Gods service than God would have them; for whereas they should carrie it upon their shoulders, they would carrie it upon a cart: Mark here, you see the first burden that they had, beyond what the other *Levites* had.

And

And those indeed that are in more honourable places than others, those that are under them think not of their burden that they are to carrie upon their shoulders, when as others have means to ease them; and many times those that are imployed in the Ministry, or Magistracy, that sit at the Stern to order the great affairs of the Common-wealth and State, you think they live bravely: They lie awake when you are asleep; if you knew the burden that lies upon their spirits, you would think that your labour and burden were very little in comparison of theirs.

2. There is another burden of danger more than the rest, and that you shall find in *Numb.*4.17. *And the Lord spake unto* Moses *and unto* Aaron, *saying, Cut ye not off the tribe of the families of the* Kohathites *from among the* Levites, *but thus do unto them that they may live, and not die: When they approch unto the most holy things*, Aaron *and his Sons shall go in and appoint them every one to his service and to his burden; but they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die.* Mark this Text: saith the Lord to *Moses* and *Aaron*, Cut ye not off the tribe of the family of the *Kohathites* from among the *Levites*. Cut them not off, why? what had they done! had they done any thing amiss? No, they had not done any thing that provoked God: but the meaning is this; Take a great care of the family of the *Kohathites*, to instruct them in their duty that they were to do; for (saith God) they are in a great deal of danger, being to serve in the most holy things: If they should go in to see the holy things more than God would have them, it is as much as their lives are worth, and therefore if you should but neglect them, and not inform them throughly in their duty, they would be undone: Saith God, They are to administer in the most holy things, and if they should but dare to presume to do any thing otherwise than God would have them about those services, it would cost them their lives; and therefore be not you careless of them, for if you neglect them, you will be a means of cutting them off. Thus you see the danger that the family of the *Kohathites were in*; they were prefer'd before others, but they were in more danger. So you think there are such men in a parish that bare the sway, and are imployed in publick service, and they carrie all before them; but you consider not their danger. And so the Ministers, they stand in the fore-front of all the spight and malice of ungodly men: indeed God imploys them in honourable service, and that service that the Angels would take delight in; but though the service be honourable, above the imployment of other works, yet the burden of danger that likewise is greater than the danger of men that are in an inferiour condition. Now when the Soul comes to get wisdom from Christ, to think of the danger that it is in, then it will be content in that low estate in which it is. A poor man that is in a low condition, thinks, I am low, and others are raised, but I know not what their burden is: and so, if he be rightly instructed in the School of Christ, he comes to be contented.

3. *In a prosperous estate there is the burden of Duty.* You look onely at the sweet and comfort that they have, and the honour and respect that they have that are in a prosperous condition; but you must consider of the dutie that they ow to God: God requires more dutie at their hands than at yours; you

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are ready to be discontented that you have not such parts and abilities as such have, but God requires more dutie of them that have more parts, God requires more dutie of them that have greater estates, than of you that have not such estates: Oh! you would fain have the honour, but can you carrie the burden of the dutie?

4. The last is, *The burden of Account in a prosperous Estate.* There is a great account that they are to give to God that enjoy great estates, and a prosperous condition: Now we are all Stewards; and one is a Steward to a meaner man, perhaps but an ordinarie Knight; another is a Steward to a Noble-man, an Earl: now the Steward of the meaner man, he hath not so much as the other hath under his hand: now shall he be discontented because there comes not so much under his hand as under the others? No thinks he, I have less, and I am to give the less account: So your account in comparison of the Ministers and Magistrates will be nothing; you are to give an account of your own souls, and so are they; you are to give an account for your own family, and so are they; but you are not to give account for Congregations, and for Towns, and Cities, and Countries. You think of Princes and Kings, Oh! what a glorious condition they are in. But what do you think of a King to give account for all the disorder and wickedness in a Kingdom that he possibly might have prevented? What abundance of glorie might a Prince bring to God, if so be that he bent his soul and all his thoughts to lift up the Name of God in a Kingdom; now what God loses for want of this, that King, Prince, or Governour he must give an account for. It is a speech of *Chrysostom* in that place of the *Hebrews*, where it is said, that men must give an account for their souls, he wonders that any men in publick place can be saved, because their account is so great that they are to give. And I remember I have read a speech of *Philip* that was King of *Spain*, (though the storie saith of him, that he had such a natural conscience, that he profest he would not do any thing against his conscience, no not in secret for the gaining of the World, yet when this man was to die) Oh saith he, that I had never been a King; Oh that I had liv'd a solitary and private life all my dayes; then should I have died a great deal more securely, I should with more confidence have gone before the Throne of God to give my account: but here is the fruit of my Kingdom, that I had all the glorie of it, it hath made my account to be harder to give to God: and thus he cries out when he was to die. And therefore you that live in private conditions remember this, If you come into Christs School, and be taught this lesson, you will be quiet in your afflictions, or private estate, in regard your account is not so great as others. It is a speech I remember I have met withal in *Latimers* Sermons that he was wont to use, *That half is more than the whole.* That is, when a man is in a mean condition, he is but halfway towards the height of prosperity that others are in: yet saith he, this is more safe though it be a meaner condition than others. Those that are in a high and prosperous condition, there is annexed to it the burden of trouble and of danger, and of duty, and of account. And thus you see how Christ trains up his Scholars in his School, and though they be weak otherwise, yet by his Spirit he gives them wisdom to understand these aright.

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The eighth lesson is this, *Christ teaches them what a great and dreadfull evil it is to be given up to ones hearts desires.* The understanding this lesson that it is a most dreadfull evil, one of the most hideous and fearfull evils that can befall any man upon the face of the earth, for God to give him up to his hearts desires: when the soul understands this once, and together with it, (for it goes along together) that spiritual Judgements are more fearfull than any outward Judgements in the World, the understanding of this will teach any one to be content in Gods crossing of them in their desires. Thou art croſt in thy desires, now thou art discontented, and vext, and fretted at it, Is that thy onely miserie that thou art croſt in thy desires? No no, thou art infinitely mistaken, the greatest miserie of all is, for God to give thee up to thy hearts lusts and desires, to give thee up to thine own counsels: so you have it in *Psal.* 81. 11. 12. *But my people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me* [what then?] *So I gave them up unto their own hearts lusts, and they walked in their own counsels.* Oh saith *Bernard*, Let me not have such a miserie as that is, for to give me what I would have, to give me my hearts desires; it is one of the most hideous Judgements in the World, for a man to be given to his hearts desires. We have not indeed in Scripture any certain evident sign of a Reprobate, we cannot say (except we knew a man had committed the sin against the holy Ghost) that he is a Reprobate, for we know not what God may work upon him; but the neareſt of all, and the blackeſt sign of a Reprobate is this, for God to give up a man to his hearts desires, all the pain of diseases, all the calamities that can be thought of in the World, are no Judgements in comparison of this, for a man to be given up to his hearts desires; now when the soul comes to understand this, the Soul then cries out, Why am I so troubled that I have not my desires? There is nothing that God conveys his wrath more through than a prosperous estate. I remember I have read of a Jewish Tradition that they say of *Uzziah*, when God struck *Uzziah* with a Leprosie, they say, that the beams of the Sun was darted upon the fore-head of *Uzziah*, and he was struck with a Leprosie by the darting of the beams of the Sun upon his fore-head; the Scripture saith, Indeed the Priests looked upon him; but they say there was a special light and beam of the Sun upon the fore-head that did discover the Leprosie to the Priests, and they say it was the way of conveying of it. Whether that were true or no, I am sure this is true, that the strong beams of the Sun of prosperitie upon many men makes them to be Leprous; Would any poor man in the Countrey have been discontented that he was not in *Uzziahs* condition? He was a great King, I but there was the Leprosie in his fore-head; the poor man may say, though I live meanly in the Countrey, yet I thank God my body is whole and sound, would not any man rather have russet and skins of beasts to cloath him with, than to have Sattin, and Velvet that should have the plague in it; The Lord conveyes the plague of his curse through prosperitie, as much as through any thing in the World, and therefore the soul coming to understand this, this makes it to be quiet and content.

And then, *Spiritual Judgements are the greatest Judgements of all*; the Lord layes such an affliction upon my outward estate, but what if he had taken away my life? A mans health is a greater mercie than his estate; and you that are

poor

poor people, you ſhould conſider of that; But is the health of a mans body better than his eſtate? what is the health of a mans ſoul? that is a great deal better; the Lord hath inflicted external judgements, but he hath not inflicted ſpiritual Judgements upon thee, he hath not given thee up to hardneſs of heart, and taken away the ſpirit of prayer from thee in thine afflicted eſtate, Oh then be of good comfort, though there be outward afflictions upon thee, yet thy ſoul, thy more excellent part is not afflicted. Now when the ſoul comes to underſtand this, that here lies the ſore wrath of God, to be given up to a mans deſires, and for Spiritual Judgements to be upon a man, this quiets him, and contents him, though outward afflictions be upon him: Perhaps one of a mans children hath the fit of an ague, or the tooth-ach, but perhaps his next neighbour hath the plague, or all his children are dead of the plague, now ſhall he be ſo diſcontented, becauſe his children have the tooth-ach, when his neighbours children are dead? Now think thus, Lord, thou haſt laid an afflicted condition upon me, but, Lord, thou haſt not given me the plague of a hard heart. Now take theſe eight things before mentioned, and lay them together, and you may well apply that Scripture in *Iſa* 29. the laſt verſe, ſaith the Text there, *They alſo that erred in ſpirit, ſhall come to underſtanding; and they that murmured ſhall learn Doctrine.* Hath there been any of you (as I fear many may be found) that have erred in ſpirit, even in regard of this truth that now we are preaching of, and many that have murmured? Oh that this day you might come to underſtand, that Chriſt would bring you into his School, and teach you underſtanding: *And they that murmured ſhall learn Doctrine:* what Doctrine ſhall they learn? Theſe eight Doctrines that I have opened to you. And if you will but throughly ſtudy theſe leſſons that I have ſet before your eyes: It will be a ſpecial help and means to cure your murmurings againſt, and repinings at the hand of God: And ſo you will come to learn Chriſtian Contentment. The Lord teach you throughly by his Spirit the Leſſons of Contentment.

Sermon VI.

Philippians. 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content.

I Shall onely add one Leſſon more in the learning of Contentment, and then I ſhall come to the fourth Head, The excellencie of Contentment.

The

The ninth and last lesson that Christ teaches those that he doth instruct in this Art of Contentment, *It is the right knowledge of Gods providence*, and therein are these four things.

1. *The Universality of providence*, that the soul must be throughly instructed in to come to this Art, to understand the Universality of providence, that is; how the providence of God goes through the whole World, extends its self to every thing: Not onely that God by his providence doth rule the World, and govern all things in general, but that it reaches to every particular, not onely to Kingdoms, to order the great affairs of Kingdoms, but it reaches to every mans Family, it reaches to every person in the Family, it reaches to every condition, yea, to every passage, to every thing that falls out concerning thee in every particular, not one hair falleth from thy head, not a Sparrow to the ground without the providence of God. There is nothing befals thee good or evil, but there is a providence of the Infinite eternal first-being in that thing, and therein indeed is Gods infiniteness, that it reaches to the least things, to the least worm that is under thy feet: Then much more it reaches unto thee that art a rational Creature, the providence of God is more especial towards rational Creatures than any others: The understanding in a spiritual way the universality of providence in every particular passage from morning to night every day; that there is not any thing that doth befall thee, but there is a hand of God in it, it is from God, it is a mighty furtherance to Contentment. Every man will grant the truth of the thing that it is so, but as the Apostle saith in *Heb.* 11. 3. *By faith we understand that the Worlds were made*, by faith we understand it: why by faith? we can understand by reason that no finite thing can be from it self, And therefore that the World could not be of its self, but we can understand it by faith in another manner than by reason. So whatsoever we understand of God in way of providence, yet when Christ doth take us into his School, we come to understand it by faith in a better manner than we do by reason.

2. *The efficacy that there is in providence*; that is, That the providence of God goes on in all things with strength and power, and it is not to be altered by our power; let us be discontented, and vext, and troubled, and fret, and rage, yet we must not think to alter the course of providence by our discontent. Some of *Jobs* friends said to him, *Shall the earth be forsaken for thee, and shall the rock be removed out of his place? Job* 18. 4. When they saw him to be impatient. So I may say to every discontented impatient heart, What, shall the providence of God change its course for thee? D'ost thou think it such a weak thing, that because it doth not please thee it must alter its course? Be thou content or not content, the providence of God will go on, it hath an efficacie of power and virtue, to carrie all things before it: Canst thou make one hair black or white with all the stir that thou keepest? When you are in a Ship at Sea that hath all her sayls spread with a full gale of wind, and swiftly saying; can you make it stand still with running up and down in the Ship? No more can you make the providence of God to alter and change its course with your vexing and fretting, but it will go on with power, do what thou canst. Do but understand the power and efficacie of providence and it will

willl be a mighty means for the helping to learn this Lesson of Contentment.

3. *The infinite variety of the works of providence*, and yet *the order of things, one working towards another*; there is infinite varietie of the Works of God in an ordinary providence, and yet all work in an ordinary way; we put these two together, for God in the way of his providence causes a thousand thousand things, one to depend upon another, there are infinite severall wheels (as I may so say) in the works of providence, all the works that ever God did from all eternity, or ever will do, put them all together, and all make up but one work, and they have been as severall wheels, that have had their orderly motion to attain the end that God from all eternity hath appointed: We indeed look at things by pieces, we look at one particular, and do not consider the reference that one thing hath to another; but God he looks at all things at once, and sees the reference that one thing hath to another: As a child that looks upon a Clock, looks first upon one wheel, and then upon another wheel, he looks not at all together, or the dependance that one hath upon another, but the workman hath his eyes upon all together, and sees the dependance of all one upon another, and the art that there is in the dependance one upon another; so it is in Gods providence. Now observe how this works to Contentment; where there is such a passage of providence befalls me, that's one wheel, and it may be if this wheel should be stopt, there might a thousand other wheels come to be stopt by this: as in a Clock, stop but one wheel, and you stop every wheel, because they have dependance one upon another: so when God hath ordered a thing for the present to be thus and thus, how do'st thou know how many things do depend upon this thing? God may have some work that he hath to do twenty yeers hence, that may depend upon this passage of providence, that fall out this day or this week. And here (by the way) we may see a great deal of evill that there is in discontent, for thou wouldest have Gods providence altered in such and such a particular, indeed if it were onely in that particular, and that had reference to nothing else, it were not so much, but by thy desire to have thy will in such a particular, it may be thou wouldest cross God in a thousand things that he hath to bring about, because it's possible there may be a thousand things depend upon that one thing, that thou wouldest fain have to be otherwise than it is; just as if a Child should cry out and say, Let but that one wheel stop, though he saith but one wheel, yet if that stop, it is as much as if he should say, they must all stop: So in Providence, let but this one passage of Providence stop, it is as much as if a thousand stopt: Let me therefore be quiet and content, for though I be croſt in some one particular, God attains his end, at least his end may be furthered in a thousand things by this one thing that I am croſt in; therefore let a man consider, this is an act of providence, and how do I know what God is about to do, and how many things depend upon this providence? Now we are willing to suffer our friends will to be croſt in one thing, so that our friend may attain to what he desires in a thousand things: If thou hast a love and friendship to God, be willing to be croſt in some few things, that the Lord may have his Work go on in the universall in a thousand of other things. That's the Third thing to be understood in Gods providence, that Christ thod learn those that he teacheth in the Art of Contentment

4. Christ teaches them the knowledge of Providence, that is, *The knowledge of Gods usuall way in his dealings with his People more particularly.* The other is, the knowledge of God in his Providence in generall. But the right understanding of the way of God in his Providence towards his People and Saints, is a notable Lesson to help us in the Art of Contentment, If we come once to know a mans way and course, we may better suite, and be contented to live with him, than before we came to know his way and course: As when a man comes to live in a society with men and women, it may be the men and women may be good, but till a man comes to know their way and course and disposition, many things may fall out very cross, and we think they are very hard, but when we come to be acquainted with their way and spirit, then we can suite and concur with them very well; and the reason of our trouble is, because we do not understand their way. So it is with you, those that are but as strangers to God, and do not understand the way of God, they are troubled with the providences of God, and they think them very strange and cannot tell what to make of them, because they understand not the ordinary course and way of God towards his People. If a stranger sometimes comes into a family, and sees such and such things done, he wonders what the matter is, but those that are acquainted with it, it troubles them not at all. So servants, when they come first together, and know not one another, it may be they are froward and discontented, but when they come to be acquainted with one anothers ways, then they are more contented: Just so it is when we come first to understand Gods ways.

Object. But you will say, *What do you understand by Gods ways?*

Answ. By that I mean these Three things. And when we come to know them, we shall not wonder so much at the providence of God, but be quiet and contented with them.

1. The first thing is this: *Gods ordinary course is, That his people in this world should be in an afflicted condition:* God hath revealed in his Word, and we may there find he hath set down to be his ordinary way, even from the beginning of the world to this day, (but more especially in the times of the Gospel) that his People here should be in an afflicted condition. Now men that do not understand this, they stand and wonder to hear of the People of God that they are afflicted, and the enemies prosper in their way; for those that seek God in his way, and seek for Reformation, for them to be afflicted, routed and spoiled, and the enemies to prevail, they wonder at it: But now, one that is in the School of Christ, he is taught by Jesus Christ, that God by his eternall Counsels hath set this to be his course and way, to bring up his People in this world in an afflicted condition, and therefore saith the Apostle, *Account it not strange concerning the fiery tryall, 1 Pet. 4. 12.* We are not therefore to be discontented with it, seeing God hath set such a course and way, and we know such is the will of God that it should be so.

The Second thing that is in Gods way is this, *Usually when God intends the greatest mercy to any of his people, he doth bring them into the lowest condition.* God doth seem to go quite cross, and work in a contrary way; when he intends the greatest mercies to his People, he doth first usually bring them into very

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low conditions, if it be a bodily mercy, an outward mercy that he intends to bestow, he useth to bring them bodily low; and outwardly low, if it be a mercy in their estates that he intends to bestow, he brings them low in that, and then raises them; and in their names he brings them low there, and then raises them; and in their spirits, God doth ordinarily bring their spirits low, and then raises their spirits; usually the People of God, before the greatest comforts, have the greatest afflictions and sorrows, now those that understand not Gods ways, they think, that when God brings his people into sad conditions, that God leaves and forsakes them, and that God doth intend no great matter of good to them; but now a Child of God that is instructed in this way of God, he is not troubled; my condition is very low, but (saith he) this is Gods way when he intends the greatest mercy, to bring men under the greatest afflictions. When he intended to raise *Joseph* to be the Second in the Kingdom, God cast him into a dungeon a little before. So when God intended to raise *David*, & set him upon the Throne, he made him to be hunted as a Partridge in the mountains, 2 *Sam.* 26. 20 God went this way with his Son; Christ himself went into glory by suffering, *Heb.* 2.20. And if God deal so with his own son, much more with his People; As a little before break of day you shall observe it is darker than it was at any time before; so God doth use to make our conditions darker a little before the mercy come. When God bestowed the last great mercy at *Naseby*, we were in a very low condition. God knew what he had to do before-hand, he knew, that his time was coming for great mercies; it is the way of God to do so. Be but instructed aright in this course and tract that God uses to walk in, and that will help us to Contentment exceedingly.

The Third thing that there is in Gods way and course is this, *It is the way of God to work by contraries, to turn the greatest evill into the greatest good.* To grant great good after great evill is one thing, and to turn great evils into the greatest good that's another; and yet that's Gods way, the greatest good that God intends for his People, many times he works it out of the greatest evill, the greatest light is brought out of the greatest darkness: and *Luther* (I remember) hath a notable expression for this, (saith he) it is the way of God, he doth humble, that he might exalt, he doth kill, that he might make alive, he doth confound, that he might glorifie; this is the way of God, saith he; but (saith he) every one doth not understand this, this is the Art of Arts, and the Science of Sciences, the knoledge of knowledges to understand this, that God doth use when he will bring life, he doth use to bring it out of death, he brings joy out of sorrow, & he brings prosperity out of adversity, yea, and many times he brings grace out of sin; that is, makes use of sin to work furtherance of grace; it is the way of God to bring good out of evil; not onely to overcome the evil, but to make the evil to work towards good: here's the way of God: now when the soul comes to understand this, it will take away our murmuring, and bring Contentment into our spirits: But I fear there are but few that understand it aright, perhaps they read of such things, and hear of such things in a sermon, but they are not by Jesus Christ instructed in this, that this is the way of God, To bring the greatest good out of the greatest evil.

Thus having dispatcht the Third Head, the Lessons that we are to learn; we

come to the Fourth, and that is, *The Excellency of this Grace of Contentment*: And there is a great deal of Excellency in Contentment; that's a kind of Leſſon too for us to learn. And this Head likewiſe will be ſomewhat long.

Saith the Apoſtle, *I have learned.* As if he ſhould ſay, Bleſſed be God for this: Oh! it is a mercy of God to me that I have learned this Leſſon, I find ſo much good in this Contentment, that I would not for a world but have it: (I have learned it ſaith he.)

Now the very Heathens had a ſight of a great Excellency that there is in Contentment. I remember I have read of *Antiſtenes* a Philoſopher, that deſired of his gods (ſpeaking after the Heatheniſh way) nothing in this world to make his life happie, but CONTENTMENT; and if he might have any thing that he would deſire to make his life happie, he would aſk of them, That he might have the ſpirit of *Socrates*, that he might have ſuch a ſpirit as *Socrates* had, to be able to bear any wrong, any injuries that he met withal, and to continue in a quiet temper of ſpirit whatſoever befell him; for what was the temper of *Socrates*, whatever befel him he continued the ſame man, whatſoever befel him no bodie could perceive any alteration of his ſpirit, though never ſo great croſſes did befall him. This a Heathen did attain to by the ſtrength of Nature, and a common work of the ſpirit: Now this *Antiſtenes* ſaw ſuch an excellency in this ſpirit: As when God ſaid to *Solomon*, What ſhall I give thee? he aſked of God wiſdom: ſo ſaith he, If the gods ſhould put it to me to know what I would have, I would deſire this thing, that I might have the ſpirit of *Socrates*: he ſaw a great excellencie that there was in this. And certainly a Chriſtian may ſee abundance of excellencie in it: I ſhall labour to ſet it out to you in this Sermon, that you may be in love with this Grace of Contentment.

In the firſt place, *By Contentment we come to give God that worſhip that is due to him:* It is a ſpecial part of Divine worſhip that we ow to God, if we be content in a Chriſtian way, according as hath been opened to you; I ſay it is a ſpecial part of the Divine worſhip that the Creature ows to the infinite Creator, in that I do tender that reſpect that is due from me to the Creator. The word that the Greeks have that ſignifies to Worſhip, it is as much as to come and crouch before another, as a dog ſhould come crouching unto you, and be willing to lie down at your feet; ſo the creature in the apprehenſion of its own baſeneſs, and the infinite Excellencie that there is in God above it; when it comes to worſhip God, it comes and crouches to this God, and it lies down at the feet of God, then doth the Creature worſhip God. When you ſee a dog come crouching to you, and can you make him with holding your hand over him to lie down at your feet; then conſider, thus ſhould you do before the Lord, you ſhould come crouching to him, and lie down at his feet upon your backs or bellies, to lie down in the duſt before him, ſo as to be willing that he ſhould do with you what he will; as ſometimes you may turn a dog this way or that way up and down with the hand, and there he lies before you, according to your ſhewing him with your hand: So when the Creature ſhall come and lie down thus before the Lord, then a Creature worſhips God, doth tender you that worſhip that is due to God. Now in what diſpoſition of heart

See this opened at large in Goſpell, Worſhip *on Levit.* 10. 3.

heart do we thus crouch to God more, than when we have this Contentation in all conditions that God disposed us unto? This is a crouching unto Gods dispose, to be like the poor woman of *Canaan*, when Christ said, it is not fit to give childrens meat to dogs, but (saith she) the dogs have crums. I am a dog, I confess, I, but let me have but a crum. And so when the soul shall be in such a disposition as to lie down and say, Lord, I am but as a dog, yet let me have a crum, then doth it highly honour God. It may be some of you have not your table spread as others have, but God gives you crums; now saith the poor woman, dogs have crums, and when you can find your hearts thus subjecting unto God, to be but as a dog, and can be contented, and bless God for any crum, I say, this is a great worship of God, you worship God by this more, than when you come to hear a Sermon, or spend half an hour, or an hour in prayer, or when you come to receive a Sacrament; These are the Acts of Gods Worship, but these are but external Acts of Worship, to hear, and pray, and receive Sacraments: But now this is the Soul-worship, to subject its self thus to God. You that often will worship God by hearing, and praying, and receiving Sacraments, and yet afterwards will be froward and discontented, know, that God regards not that Worship, he will have the Soul-worship in this subjecting of the soul to God. Observe it I beseech you, in active obedience, there we Worship God by doing that that pleases God, but by passive obedience, we do as well Worship God by being pleased with that which God doth. Now when I perform a duty, I Worship God, I do what pleases God: why should I not as well Worship God when I am pleased with what God doth? As it was said of Christs obedience, Christ was active in his passive obedience, and passive in his active obedience: So the Saints, they are passive in their obedience; they are first passive in their reception of grace, and then active: And when they come to passive obedience they are active, they put forth grace in active obedience, when they perform actions to God, then saith the Soul, Oh! that I could do that that pleases God; when they come to suffer any cross, Oh that what God doth might please me. I labour to do what pleases God, and I labour that what God doth shall please me, here is a Christian indeed that shall indeavour both these: now this is but one side of a Christian, to endeavour to do what pleases God, but you must as well indeavour to be pleased with what God doth, and so you shall come to be a compleat Christian, when you can do both. And that is the first thing in the excellency of this grace of Contentment.

The second thing in opening of this excellencie of Contentment is, *That in Contentment there is much exercise of grace*, There is much strength of grace, yea, there is much beauty of grace in Contentment, there is much exercise of grace, strength of grace, and beauty of grace, I put all these together.

1. *Much exercise of grace*, There is a composition of grace in Contentment, there is faith, and there is humility, and love, and there is patience, and there is wisdom, and there is hope, all graces almost are compounded, it is in oyl that hath the ingredients of all kind of graces, and therefore though you cannot see the particular grace, yet in this oyl you have it all; God sees the

Graces of his Spirit exercised in a special manner, and this pleases God at the heart, to see the Graces of his Spirit exercised. In some one action that you do, you may exercise some one grace especially, but now in Contentment you exercise a great many graces at once.

2. *There is a great deal of strength of Grace in Contentment.* It argues a great deal of strength in the bodie, the bodie to be able to endure hard weather, and whatsoever falls out, & yet not to be much altered by it; so it argues strength of Grace to be content: You that complain of weakness of memorie, and weakness of parts, you cannot do what others do in other things, but have you this gracious Heart-contentment that hath been opened to you? I know that you have attained to strength of Grace in this, when it is so spiritual as hath been opened to you in the explication of this point. As it is with a mans brain, if a man be distempered in his bodie, and hath many obstructions in his bodie, hath an ill stomach, and his spleen and liver obstructed, and yet for all this his brain is not distempered, it is an argument of a great strength of brain, and though there be many ill fumes that riseth from his corrupt stomach, yet still his brain is not distempered, but he continues in the free exercise of the use of his reason and understanding; every one may understand that this man hath a very strong brain, that such things shall not distemper him, whereas other people that have a weak brain, if they do not digest but one meals meat, the fumes that do arise from their stomachs, doth distemper their brain, and make them unfit for any thing, whereas you shall have others that have strong heads, and strong brains, though their stomachs be ill, that they do not digest meat, yet still they have the free use of their brain, this argues strength: So it is in a mans spirit, you shall have many that have weak spirits, and if they have any ill fumes, if accidents befall them, you shall presently have them out of temper, but you shall have other men, that though things do fume up, yet still they keep in a steadie way, and have the use of reason and of other graces, and possess their souls with patience. As I remember, it's reported of the Eagle, it's not like other fowls, other fowls when they are hungrie make a noise, but the Eagle is never heard to make a noise though it wants food, and it's from the magnitude of his spirit, that it will not make such complaints as other fowls will do when they want food, it is, because it is above hunger, and above thirst: So it is an argument of a gracious magnitude of spirit, that whatsoever befalls it, yet it is not always whyning and complaining so as others are, but goes on still in its way and course, and blesses God, and keeps in a constant tenour whatsoever things befalls it: such things as causes others to be dejected, and fretted and vexed, and takes away all the comfort of their lives, it makes no alteration at all in the spirits of these men and women, I say this is a sign of a great deal of strength of Grace.

It's also an argument of a great deal of beauty of Grace. It's a speech that *Seneca*, a Heathen, once had; saith he, When you go abroad into Groves and Woods; and there you see the tallness of the trees, and their shadows, it strikes a kind of awfull fear of a Deitie in you, and when you see the vast Rivers and Fountains, and deep Waters, that strikes a kind of fear of a God in you; but (saith he) do you see a man that is quiet in tempests, and that lives happily

happily in the midst of adversities, why do not you worship that man? he doth think him a man even to be honoured, that shall be quiet and live a happy life though in the middest of adversities. The Glory of God appears here more than in any of his Works; there is no Works that God hath made, the Sun, Moon, and Stars, and all the world wherein so much of the Glory of God doth appear, as in a man that lives quietly in the midst of adversity. That was that that convinc'd the King, when he saw the three children could walk in the midst of the fiery fornace and not be touch'd, the King was mightily convinc'd by this, that surely their God was a great God indeed, & that they were highly beloved of their God that could walk in the midst of the fornace and not be toucht, whereas the others that came but to the mouth of the fornace were devoured; so when a Christian can walk in the midst of fiery trials and not his garments singed, but have comfort and joy in the midst of all (as *Paul* in the stocks) can sing, (that wrought upon the Jaylor:) so it will convince men when they see the power of Grace in the middest of affliction, such afflictions as would make others to roar under them, yet they can behave themselves in a gracious and holy manner; Oh it's the glory of a Christian. It is that that is said to be the Glory of Christ (for so, by Interpreters, it is thought to be meant of Christ) In *Micah* 5. 5. *And this man* (the text saith) *shall be the peace, when the* Assyrian *shall come into our Land; and when he shall tread in our Pallaces.* This man shall be the peace when the *Assyrian* shall come into our Land; for one to be in peace when there is no Enemies, it's no great matter, but saith the text when the *Assyrian* shall come into our Land, then this man shall be the peace; that is, when all shall be in an hubbub and uproar, yet then this man shall be peace. That's the tryall of Grace, when you find Jesus Christ in your hearts to be peace, when the *Assyrian* shall come into the Land. You may think you find peace in Christ when you have no outward troubles, but is Christ your peace when the Assyrian comes into the Land, when the Enemy comes? Suppose you should hear the enemy come marching in the Citty and had taken the Works, and were plundering, what would be your peace? Jesus Christ would be peace to the soul, when the enemy comes into the City, and into your houses: If there be any of you that have been where the enemy hath come, What hath been the peace of your souls? That which is said of Christ may be applied to this Grace of Contentment, when the *Assyrian*, the Plunderers, the Enemies, when any Affliction, trouble or distress doth befall such a heart, then this Grace of Contentment brings peace to the soul; at that time brings peace to their soul when the *Assyrian* comes into the Land. The Grace of Contentment it's an excellent Grace, there's much beauty, much strength in it, there is a great deal of worth in this Grace, & therefore be in love with it.

The Third thing in the Excellency of Contentment, is this: *By Contentment the soul is fitted to receive mercy, and to do service.* I'le put these two together, Contentment makes the soul fit to receive mercy, and to do service; no man or woman in the world is so fit for to receive the Grace of God, and to do the Work of God, as those that have contented spirits.

1. *Those are fitted to receive mercy from the Lord that are contented*: as now; if you would have a vessel to take in any liquor, you must hold the

veſſel ſtill, if the veſſel ſtir and ſhake up and down, you cannot powr in any thing, but you will bid, hold ſtill that you may powr it in, and not loſe any: So, if we would be the veſſels to receive Gods mercy, and would have the Lord powr in his mercy to us, we muſt have quiet hearts, we muſt not have hearts hurrying up and down in trouble, diſcontent, and vexing, but we muſt have ſtill and quiet hearts, if we would receive mercy from the Lord: if a child flings and throws up & down for a thing, you will not give it him then when he cries ſo, but firſt you will have the child quiet; though perhaps you do intend the child ſhall have the thing he cries for, but you will not give it him till he is quiet, and comes and ſtands ſtill before you, and is contented without it, and then you will give it him: And truly ſo doth the Lord deal with us, (for our dealings with him are juſt as your froward childrens are with you) as ſoon as you would have a thing from God, if you have it not, you are diſquieted preſently, and all in an uprore (as it were) in your ſpirits: God intends mercy to you, but ſaith God, you ſhall not have it yet, I will ſee you quiet firſt, and then in the quietneſs of your heart, come to me and ſee what I will do with you. I appeal to you, you that are any ways acquainted with the ways of God, Have you not found this to be the way of God towards you, when you have been troubled for want, perhaps of ſome Spirituall comfort, and your hearts were vext at it, you get nothing from God all that while; but now: if you have got your heart into a quiet frame, and can ſay, Well, it's fit the Lord ſhould do with his poor creatures, what he will, I am under his feet, and am reſolv'd to do what I can to honour him; and let him do with me what he will, I will ſeek him as long as I live, I will be content with what God gives, and whether he gives or no I will be content; yea, are you in this frame ſaith God? now you ſhall have comfort, now I will give you the mercy. A priſoner muſt not think to get off his ſetter, by pulling and tearing, he may gall his fleſh and rend it to the very bone, certainly he will be unfettered never the ſooner, but if he have his ſetters taken off, he muſt quietly give up himſelf to ſome man to take them off. If a begger after he hath knockt once or twice at the door, and you come not, and thereupon he is vext and troubled, and thinks much that you let him ſtand a little while without any thing, you think that this begger is not fit to receive an alms; but if you hear two or three beggers at your door, and if you hear them out of your window ſay, Let us be content to ſtay, perhaps they are buſie, it is fit that we ſhould ſtay, it's well if we have any thing at laſt, we deſerve nothing at all, and therefore we may well wait awhile; you would then quickly ſend them an alms: So God deals with the heart, when it is in a diſquiet way, then God doth not give; but when the heart lies down quietly under Gods hand, then is the heart in a fit frame to receive mercy; *Your ſtrength ſhall be, to ſit ſtill* ſaith God; you ſhall not be delivered from *Babylon* but by your ſitting ſtill.

2. As fit to receive mercy, *ſo fit to do ſervice*; Oh! the quiet fruits of Righteouſneſs, the peaceable fruits of Righteouſneſs; they indeed do proſper and multiply moſt when they come to be peaceable fruits of Righteouſneſs. As the Philoſophers ſay of every thing that move, nothing that moves but it moves upon ſomething that is unmoveable; as a thing that moves upon the earth, if the earth were not ſtill it could not move.

Object

Object. The ships move upon the Sea, and that is not still.

Answ. But the Seas they move upon that which is still and immoveable, there is nothing moves but it hath something immoveable that doth uphold it: the wheels in a Coach they move up and down, but the axletree that moves not up and down; so it is with a heart of a man. As they say of the Heaven, it moves up & down upon a Pole that is immoveable: so it is in the heart of a mā, if he will move to do service to God, he must have a steady heart within him, that must help him to move in the service of God: those that have unstedy disquiet spirits, that have no stedfastnes at all in them; they are not fit to do service for God, but such as have steadfastnes in their spirits, they are men and women fit to do any service, and that's the reason that when the Lord hath any great work for any servants of his to do, usually he doth first quiet their spirits, he doth bring their spirits into a quiet sweet frame to be contented with any thing, and then he sets them about imployment.

The fifth Excellency is this, *Contentment it doth deliver us from abundance of temptations.* Oh the temptations that men of discontented spirits are subject to. The Devil loves to fish in troubled waters. That is our proverb of men and women, their disposition is to fish in troubled waters, they say it is good fishing in troubled waters, this is the maxim of the Devil, he loves to fish in troubled waters, where he sees the spirits of men and women troubled and vext, there the Devil comes, saith he, there is good fishing for me, when he sees men and women go discontented up and down, & he can get them alone, then he comes with his temptations, saith he, Will you suffer such a thing? take such a shifting indirect way, do not you see how poor you are, others are brave, you know not what you shall do against winter, to provide fewel and get bread for you, and your children, and so he tempts them to unlawfull courses, this is the special distemper that the Devil fastens upon, when he brings men and women to give up their souls to him, it is upon discontent: That is the ground of all those that have been Witches, and so have given up themselves to the Devil, the rise of it hath been their discontent, and therefore it is observeable, that those the Devil worketh upon to make them Witches, usually they are old and melancholly people, and women especially, and those that are of the poorer sort that are discontent at home, their neighbours trouble them, & vex them, and their spirits are weak and they cannot bear it, so upon that the Devil fastens his temptations and draws them to any thing; if they be poor, then he promises them money, if they have revengefull spirits, then he tells them that he will revenge them upon such and such persons, now this quiets and contents them. Oh! there is matter of temptation for the Devil where he meets with a discontented spirit. As *Luther* saith of God, God doth not dwell in *Babylon*, but in *Salem*, *Babylon* signifies confusion, and *Salem* signifies peace: now God doth not dwell in spirits that are in a confusion, but he dwells in peaceable and quiet spirits. Oh! if you would free your selves from temptations, labour for Contentment, It is the peace of God that guards the heart from temptation. I remember I have read of one *Marius Curio*, that when he had bribes sent him, to tempt him to be unfaithfull to his Countrey, he was sitting at home at dinner with a dish of Turnips, and they came and promised him rewards;

faith

ſaith he, That man that can be contented with this fare that I have, will not be tempted with your rewards, I thank God, I am content with this fare, and as for rewards, let them be offerred to thoſe that cannot be content to dine with a diſh of Turnips. So the truth is, we ſee it apparently, that the reaſon why many do betray their truſt, as in the Parliament ſervice and Kingdom, becauſe they cannot be contented to be in a low condition. Let a man be contented to be in a low condition, and to go meanly clothed, if God ſees it fit, ſuch a man is ſhot-free (as I may ſo ſay) from thouſands of temptations of the Devil, that do prevail againſt others to the damning of their ſouls; Oh in ſuch times as theſe are, when men are in danger of the loſs of their eſtates, I ſay theſe men that have not got this grace are in a moſt lamentable condition, they are in more danger for their ſouls, than they are for their outward eſtates, you think it a ſad thing to be in danger of your outward eſtates, that you may loſe all in a night, but if you have not this contented ſpirit within you, you are in more danger of the temptations of the Devil, to be plundered that way of any good, and to be led into ſin; Oh when men think thus, they muſt live as brave as they were wont to do, theſe men make themſelves a prey to the Devil; but for ſuch as can ſay, Let God do with me what he pleaſes, I am content to ſubmit to his hand in it, the Devil will ſcarce meddle with ſuch men. It's a notable ſpeech of a Philoſopher that lived upon mean fare, and as he was eating herbs and roots, ſaith one to him, If you would but pleaſe *Dionyſius*, you need not eat herbs and roots: but he anſwered him thus, If you would but be content with ſuch mean fare, you need not flatter *Dionyſius*. So temptations will no more prevail upon a contented man, than a dart that is thrown againſt a brazen wall. That's the Fifth particular.

The Sixth Excellencie is, *The abundant comforts in a mans life that Contentment will bring*. Contentment will make a mans life exceeding ſweet and comfortable, nothing more than the Grace of Contentment; many ways I will ſhew how it brings in Comfort.

1. As firſt, What a man hath, *he hath it in a kind of Independant way*, not depending upon any creature for his comfort.

2. *A contented man whoſe eſtate is low, if God raiſes his eſtate, he hath the love of God in it*, and then it's abundantly more ſweet, than if he had it and his heart not contented: for if he had not the love of God in it, for it may be God grants to a diſcontented man his deſire, but he cannot ſay it is from love; if a man hath quieted his ſpirit firſt, and then God grant him his deſire, he may have more comfort in it, and more aſſurance that he hath the love of God in it.

This Contentment is a comfort to a mans ſpirit in this, *that it doth keep in his comforts, and keep out whatſoever may damp his comforts, or put out the light of them.* I may compare this Grace of Contentment to a Marriners Lanthorn, a Marriner when he is at Sea, let him have never ſo much proviſion in his Ship, yet if he be thouſands of leagues from land, or in a road that he ſhall not meet with a Ship in three or four moneths, if he hath never a Lanthorn in his Ship, or nothing whereby he can keep a Candle light in a Storm, he will be in a ſad condition, he would give a great deal to have a Lanthorn, or

ſome-

something that may serve instead of it. When a storm comes in the night, and he cannot have any light come above board, but is puft out presently, his condition is very sad: so many men can have the light of comfort when there is no storm, but let there come but any affliction, any storm upon them, their light is puft out presently, and what shall they do now? When the heart is furnished with this Grace of Contentment, this Grace is (as it were) the Lanthorn, and it keeps comfort in the spirit of a man, light in the midst of a storm and tempest. When you have a Lanthorn, in the midst of a storm you can carry a light every where up and down the Ship, to the top of the Mast if you will, and yet keep it light; so the comfort of a Christian, when it is enlivened with the grace of Contentment, it may be kept light whatever storms or tempests come yet he can keep light in his soul. Oh! this helps thy comforts exceeding much.

Seventhly. *There is this excellency in Contentment, that it fetches in the comfort of those things we have not really in possession*; and perhaps many that have not outward things, have more comfort than those have that do enjoy them themselves: As now, a man by distilling herbs, though he hath not the herbs themselves, yet having the water that is distilled out of them, he may enjoy the benefit of the herbs: so though a man hath not the real possession of such an outward estate, an outward comfort, yet he, by the Grace of Contentment, may fetch it in to himself. By the art of Navigation, we can fetch in the riches of the East and West-Indies to our selves; so by the art of Contentment, we may fetch in the comfort of any condition to our selves; that is, we may have that comfort by Contentment that we should have if we had the thing it self. there is a notable storie you have for this in *Plutarch*, in the life of *Pyrhus*; one *Sineus* comes to him, and would very fain have had him desist from the Wars, and not war with the Romans; saith he to him, May it please your Majestie, it is reported that the Romans are very good men of War, and if it please the gods we do overcome them, what benefit shall we have of that victorie? *Pyrhus* answered him, We shall then straight conquer all the rest of *Italie* with ease. saith *Sineus*, indeed it is likely which your Grace speaketh: But when we have won *Italie*, will then our wars end? If the Gods were pleased, said *Pyrhus*, that the Victorie were atchieved, the way were then broad open for us to attain great conquests, for who would not afterwards go into *Africk*, and so to *Carthage?* But (saith *Sineus*) when we have all in our hands, what shall we do in the end? then *Pyrhus* laughing, told him again, we will then be quiet and take our ease, and make feasts every day, and be as merrie one with another as we can possible: saith *Sineus*, What letteth us now to be as quiet, and merrie together, sith we enjoy presently without further travel and trouble which we should go seek for abroad, with such shedding of bloud, and so manifest danger: Cannot you sit down and be merrie now? So a man may think, if I had such a thing, then I would have another; and if I had that, then I would have more: and what if you had got all your desire? then you would be content, why, you may be content now without them. Certainly, our Contentment doth not consist in the getting of the thing we desire, but in God fashioning our spirits to our conditions: There's some men that have not a foot

of

foot of ground of their own, yet will live better than other men that are heirs to a great deal of land. I have known it in the Countrey ſometimes, that a man lives upon his own Land, and yet lives very poorly, but you ſhall have another man that ſhall farm his Land, and yet by his good husbandry, and by his care ſhall live better ſometimes than he that hath the Land of his own: So a man by this art of Contentment may live better without an eſtate than another man can of an eſtate: Oh! it adds exceeding much to the comfort of a Chriſtian: and that I may ſhew it further, there is more comfort even in grace of Contentment, than there is in any poſſeſſions whatſoever; a man hath more comfort in being content without a thing, than he can have in a thing that he in a diſcontented way doth deſire.

You think, if I had ſuch a thing, then I ſhould be content. I ſay, There is more good in Contentment, than there is in the thing that you would fain have to cure your diſcontent, and that I ſhall open in divers particulars. As thus,

1. I would fain have ſuch a thing, and then I could be content; but if I had it then it were but the creature that did help to my Contentment; but now it is the grace of God in my ſoul that makes me content: and ſurely it is better to be content with the grace of God in my ſoul, than with the injoying of an outward comfort.

2. If I had ſuch a thing, indeed my eſtate might be better, but my ſoul would not be better; but by Contentment my ſoul is better, that would not be bettered by an Eſtate, or Lands, or friends; but Contentment makes my ſelf to be better: and therefore Contentment is a better portion than the thing is that I would fain have to be my portion.

3. If I get Content by having my deſire ſatisfied, that is but ſelf-love; but when I am Contented with the hand of God, and am willing to be at his diſpoſe, that comes from my love to God, in having my deſire ſatisfied there I am contented through ſelf-love, but through the grace of Contentment I come to be Contented out of love to God; and is it not better to be contented from a principle of love to God, than from a principle of ſelf-love?

4. If I am contented becauſe I have that that I have a deſire to, perhaps I am contented in that one particular, but that one particular doth not furniſh me with Contentment in another thing; perhaps I may grow more dainty and nice, and froward in other things: if you give children what they would have in ſome things, they grow ſo much the more coy and dainty, and diſcontented if they have not other things that they would have; but if I have once overcome my heart, and am contented through the grace of God in my heart, then this doth not content me onely in a particular, but in general, whatſoever befals me. I am diſcontented, and would fain have ſuch a thing, and afterwards I have it: now doth this prepare me to be contented in other things? No, but when I have gotten this grace of Contentment, I am prepar'd to be contented in all conditions: and thus you ſee that Contentment doth bring comfort to a mans life, fils a mans life full of comfort in this world: yea, the truth is, it is even a Heaven upon earth, why? what is Heaven, but the reſt and quiet of a mans ſpirit; what is the ſpecial thing that is in Heaven, but reſt, and joy,

that

that makes the life of Heaven, there is rest, and joy, and satisfaction in God: so it is here in a contented spirit, there is rest, and joy, and satisfaction in God: In Heaven there is singing praises to God; a contented heart is always praising and blessing God; thou hast Heaven while thou art upon earth, when thou hast a contented spirit, yea, in some regards it is better than Heaven. How is that you will say? there is some kind of honour that God hath in it, and some excellency that he hath not in Heaven, and that is this:

In Heaven there is no overcoming of temptations, they are not put to any trials by afflictions: there in Heaven they have exercise of grace, but they have nothing but encouragement to it, and indeed, those that are there, their grace is perfect, and in that they do excel us; but there is nothing to cross their grace, they have no trials at all to tempt them to do contrarie; but now for a man or woman to be in the midst of afflictions, temptations and troubles, and yet to have grace exercised, and yet to be satisfied in God and Christ, and in the word and promises in the midst of all they suffer, this may seem to be an honour that God hath from us, that he hath not from the Angels and Saints in Heaven. Is it so much for one that is in Heaven that hath nothing else but good from God, hath nothing to try them, no temptations, is that so much for them to be praising and blessing God, as for the poor soul that is in the midst of tryals and temptations, and afflictions, and troubles? For this soul to go on praising, and blessing, and serving God, (I say it is an excellency that thou shalt not have in Heaven, and God shall not have this kind of glory from thee in Heaven, and therefore be contented, and prize this Contentment, and be willing to live in this world as long as God shall please, and do not think, Oh that I were delivered from all these afflictions and troubles here in this world! if thou were, then thou shouldest have more ease to thy self: but here's a way of honouring God, and manifesting the excellency of Grace here, when thou art in this conflict of temptation, that God shall not have from thee in Heaven, and therefore be satisfied and quiet, be contented with thy Contentment: I want such and such things that others have, but blessed be God I have a contented heart that others have not, then I say be content with thy Contentment, for that's a rich portion that the Lord hath granted unto them, if the Lord should give unto thee thousands here in this world, it would not be such a rich portion as this, that he hath given thee a contented spirit: Oh go away and praise the Name of God, and say, Lord, it's true, these and these comforts that others have, I should be glad if I had them, but thou hast cut me short, but though I want these, yet thou hast given me that that is as good and better, thou hast given me a quiet contented heart, to be willing to be at thy dispose.

Sermon.

Sermon VII.

PHILIPPIANS 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

WE proceed now. There are some two or three things more of the excellencie of Contentment, and then we are to proceed to Application of the point.

The Eighth Excellencie is, *Contentment is a great blessing of God upon the soul.* There is Gods blessing upon those that are content, the blessing of God is upon them, and their estates, and upon all that they have. We read in *Deuteronomie* of the blessing of *Judah*, the principal Tribe; this is the blessing of *Judah*, *And he said, Hear, Lord, the voice of* Judah, *and bring him unto his people, let his hands be sufficient for him, and be thou an help to him from his enemies.* Let his hand be sufficient for him; that is, bring in a sufficiencie of all good unto him, that he may have of his own, that's the blessing of *Judah*. So when God gives thee a sufficiencie of thine own, (as every contented man hath) there is the blessing of God upon thee, the blessing of the principal Tribe, of *Judah*, is upon thee. It is the Lord that gives us all things to enjoy, we may have the thing, and yet not enjoy it except God comes in with his blessing, now whatsoever thou hast thou doest enjoy it: Many men have estates and do not enjoy them, it's the blessing of God that gives us all things to enjoy, it is God that through his blessing, hath fashioned thy heart, and made it suitable to thy condition.

The Ninth Excellencie, *Those that are content, they may expect reward from God, that God shall give unto them the good of all those things that they are contented to be without*, and this brings in abundance of good to a contented spirit; There is such and such a mercie that thou thinkest would be very comfortable unto thee if thou hadst it, but canst thou bring thy heart to submit to God in it? thou shalt have the blessing of the mercie one way or other; if thou hast not the thing it self in *re*, thou shalt have it made up one way or other, thou shalt have a Bill of exchange to receive somewhat in lieu of it, there is no comfort that any soul is content to be without, but the Lord will give either the comfort or somewhat instead of it: Thou shalt have a reward to thy soul for what ever good thing thou art content to be without. You know what the Scripture saith of active obedience, and the Lord doth accept (of his servants) their will for the deed, though we do not do a good thing, yet if our

hearts

hearts be upright, to will to do it, we shall have the blessing, though we do not do the thing: You that complain of weakness, you cannot do as others do, you cannot do as much service as others do, if your hearts be as upright with God, and would fain do the same service that you see others do; you would account it a great blessing of God upon you, the greatest blessing in the world, if you were able to do as others do: now you may comfort your selves with this, having to deal with God in the way of the Covenant of Grace, you shall have from God the reward of all you would do, as a wicked man shall have punishment for all the sin he would commit, so thou shalt have the reward for all the good thou wouldst do. Now, may we not draw an argument from active obedience to passive? There is as good reason why thou shouldest expect, that God will reward thee for all that thou art willing to suffer, as well as for all that thou art willing to do; now if thou beest willing to be without such a comfort and mercie, when God sees it fit, thou shalt be no loser, certainly God will reward thee either with the comfort, or with that that shall be as good to thee as the comfort; therefore consider, how many things have I that others want? and can I bring my heart into a quiet contented frame to want what others have? I have the blessing of all that they have, and I shall either possess such things as others have, or else God will make it up one way or other, either here, or hereafter in eternitie to me; Oh what riches are here! with Contentment thou hast all kind of riches.

Tenthly and lastly, *By Contentment the Soul comes to an Excellencie near unto God himself, yea, the nearest that may be*, for this word that is trnslated *Content*, it is a word that signifies a *Self-sufficiencie* (as I told you in the opening of the words.) A Contented man is a Self-sufficient man. What is the great Glory of God, but to be happie and self-sufficient in himself? Indeed he is said to be All-sufficient, but that's but a further addition of the word *All*, rather than of any matter; for to be Sufficient, is All-sufficient: Now is this the Glory of God, to be Sufficient? to have Sufficiencie in himself, *El shaddai*, to be God, having Sufficiencie in himself? Now thou comest near to this, thou partakest of the Divine Nature, as by Grace in general, so in a more peculiar manner by this Grace of *Christian Contentment*, what's the Excellencie and Glorie of God but this? Suppose there were no Creatures in the world, and that all the Creatures in the world were annihilated, God would remain the same blessed God that he is now, he would not be in a worse condition, if all Creatures were gone; neither would a contented heart, if God should take away all Creatures from him, a contented heart hath enough in the want of all Creatures, and would not be more miserable than now he is. Suppose that God should continue thee here, and all Creatures that are here in this world were taken away, yet thou still (having God to be thy portion) wouldst be as happie as now thou art, and therefore Contentation hath a great deal of Excellencie in it.

Thus we have shewed, in many particulars, the excellencie of this Grace, labouring to present the beautie of it before your souls, that you may be in love with it.

Now my Brethren, what remains but the practice of this? for this Art of Con-

Contentment is not a ſpeculative thing, onely for contemplation, but it is an art of Divinitie, and therefore practical, ye are now to labour to work upon your hearts, that there may be this grace in you, that you may honour God, and honour your profeſſion with this Grace of Contentment, for there is none doth more honour God, and honour their profeſſion, than thoſe that have this Grace of Contentment. Now that we may fall upon the practiſe, there is required,

Firſt, *That we ſhould be humbled in our hearts for the want of this, that we have had ſo little of this Grace in us.* For there is no way to ſet upon any dutie with profit, till the heart be humbled for the want of the performance of the dutie before; many men, when they hear of a dutie that they ſhould perform, they will labour to perform it, but firſt thou muſt be humbled for the want of it, therefore that's the thing that I ſhall endeavour in the Application, to get your hearts to be humbled for want of this Grace; O had I had this Grace of Contentment, what a happie life I might have lived! what abundance of honour I might have brought to the Name of God, and how might I have honoured my profeſſion? and what a deal of comfort might I have enjoyed? but the Lord knows it hath been far otherwiſe, Oh how far have I been from this Grace of Contentment that hath been opened to me? I have had a murmuring, a vexing, and fretting heart within me, every little croſs hath put me out of temper and out of frame, O the boiſterouſneſs of my ſpirit! what a deal of evil doth God ſee in my heart, in the vexing and fretting of my heart, and murmuring and repining of my ſpirit? O that God would make you to ſee it: Now to the end that you might be humbled for the want of this, I ſhall endeavour in theſe particulars to ſpeak unto it.

Firſt, I ſhall ſet before you, *The evil of a murmuring ſpirit, there is more evil than you are aware of.*

In the ſecond place, *I will ſhew you ſome aggravations of this evil,* It's evil in all, but in ſome more than in others.

Thirdly, *I ſhall labour to take away the Pleas that any murmuring diſcontented heart hath for this diſtemper of his.*

There's theſe Three things in this Uſe of humiliation of the ſoul for the want of this Grace of Contentment.

For the firſt, now at this time. The great evil that there is in a murmuring diſcontented heart.

In the firſt place, *This thy murmuring and diſcontentedneſs, it argues much corruption that is in the Soul;* as Contentment argues much Grace, and ſtrong Grace, and beautifull Grace; ſo this argues much Corruption, and ſtrong Corruption, and very vile Corruptions in thy heart. As it is in a mans bodie, if a mans bodie be of that temper that every ſcratch of a pin makes his fleſh to rankle and to be a ſore, you will ſay, ſurely this mans bodie is very corrupt, his bloud and his fleſh are corrupt, that every ſcratch of a pin ſhall make it rankle, ſo it is in thy ſpirit; if every little trouble and affliction ſhall make thee diſcontented, and make thee murmur, and even cauſe thy ſpirit within thee to rankle; or as it in is a wound in a mans bodie, the evil of a wound, it is not ſo much in the largeneſs of the wound, and the abundance of bloud that comes

out

out of the wound, but in the inflammation that there is in it, or in a fretting & corroding humour that is in the wound; an unskilfull man when he comes and sees a large wound in the flesh, looks upon it as a dangerous wound, and when he sees a great deal of bloud gush out, he thinks these are the evils of it, but when a Chirurgion comes and sees a great gash, saith he, this will be heal'd within a few dayes, but there is a less wound, and there is an inflammation, or a fretting humour that is in it, and this will cost time (saith he) to cure, so that he doth not lay Balsom and healing Salves upon it, but his great care is to get out the fretting humour, or inflammation, so that the thing that must heal this wound it is some drink to purge; But (saith the patient) what good will this do to my wound? You give me somewhat to drink, and my wound is in my arm, or in my leg, what good will this do that I put in my stomach? Yes, it purges out the fretting humour, or takes away the inflammation, and till that be taken away, the Salves can do no good. So it is just for all the World in the souls of men, it may be there is some affliction upon them that I compare to the wound; now they think that the greatness of the affliction is that which makes their condition most miserable: Oh no, there is a fretting humour, an inflmamation in the heart, a murmuring spirit that is within thee, and that is the miserie of thy condition, and that must be purged out of thee before thou canst be healed, and let God do with thee what he will, till he purges out that fretting humour, thy wound will not be healed; a murmuring heart is a very sinfull heart, so that when thou art troubled for such an affliction, thou hadst need turn thy thoughts, rather to be troubled for the murmuring of thy heart, for that is the greatest trouble; there is an affliction upon thee, and that is grievous, but there is a murmuring heart within, and that is more grievous. Oh! that we could but convince men and women that a murmuring spirit is a greater evil than any affliction, let the affliction be what it will be. We shall shew more afterward that a murmuring spirit is the evil of the evil, and the miserie of the miserie.

Secondly, *The evil of murmuring is such, that God when he would speak of wicked men, and describe them, and shew the brand of a wicked and ungodly man or woman, he instances in this sin in a more special manner:* I might name many Scriptures, but that Scripture in *Jude* is a most remarkable one, in the 14. vers. and so forward, there it is said, *That the Lord comes with ten thousands of his Saints, to execute judgement upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.* Mark here in this 15. verse, there is four times mentioned ungodly ones; All that are *ungodly* among them, all their *ungodly* deeds which they have *ungodly* committed, and of all their hard speeches, which *ungodly* sinners have spoken against him: This is in the general. But now he comes in the particular to shew who these are, these are (saith he) murmurers: that is the very first. Would you know who are ungodly men, that God when he comes with ten thousand of Angels shall come to punish for all their ungodly deeds that they do, and those that speak ungodly things against them? These ungodly ones are murmurers; murmurers in the Scripture are put in the fore-front of ungodly ones, it is a most dread-

full Scripture, that the Lord, when he ſpeaks of ungodly ones, puts murmurers in the very fore-front of all; you had need look to your ſpirits, you may ſee that this murmuring, which is the vice contrarie to this Contentment, is not ſo ſmall a matter as you think; you think you are not ſo ungodly as others, becauſe you do not ſwear and drink as others do, but you may be ungodly in murmuring, it is true, there is no ſin but ſome ſeeds and remainers of it are in thoſe that are godly, but when they are under the power of this ſin of murmuring, it doth convince them to be ungodly, as well as if they were under the power of drunkenneſs, or whoredom, or any other ſin; God will look upon you as ungodly for this ſin as well as for any ſin whatſoever. This one Scripture ſhould make the heart ſhake at the thought of the ſin of murmuring.

Thirdly, As it is made a brand of ungodly men, ſo you ſhall find in Scripture *that God accounts it Rebellion*, that is contrarie to the worſhip that there was in contentedneſs: that is worſhipping of God, crouching to God, and falling down before him, even as a dog that would crouch when you hold a ſtaff over him: but a murmuring heart it is a rebellious heart, and that you ſhall find if you compare two Scriptures together, they are both in the book of *Numb.* 16.41. *But on the morrow* (ſaith the Text) *all the congregation of the children of Iſrael murmured againſt* Moſes *and againſt* Aaron, *ſaying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord.* They all murmured; now compare this with Chap. 17. and verſ. 10. *And the Lord ſaid unto* Moſes, *Bring* Aarons *rod again before the teſtimonie to be kept for a token againſt the Rebels.* In the 16. Chap. they murmured againſt *Moſes* and *Aaron*, and in the 17. Chap. bring the rod of *Aaron* again before the teſtimonie for a token againſt the *Rebels*. So that to be a murmurer, and to be a Rebel, you ſee in Scripture phraſe, is all one, it is a rebellion againſt God: as it is the beginning of rebellion and ſedition in a Kingdom when the people are diſcontent, and when diſcontentment comes it grows to murmuring, and you can go into no houſe almoſt but there is murmuring when men are diſcontent, ſo that within a little while it breaks forth into ſedition or rebellion. Murmuring it is but as the ſmoke of the fire, there is firſt a ſmoke and ſmother before the flame breaks forth, and ſo before open rebellion in a Kingdom, there is firſt a ſmoke of murmuring, and then it breaks forth into open rebellion; but becauſe it hath rebellion in the ſeeds of it, therefore it is accounted, before the Lord, to be rebellion. Wilt thou be a Rebel againſt God? When thou feeleſt thy heart diſcontented and murmuring againſt the diſpenſations of God towards thee, thou ſhouldeſt check thy heart thus, Oh thou wretched heart! what? wilt thou be a Rebel againſt God? wilt thou riſe in a way of rebellion againſt the infinite God? yet thus thou haſt done: charge thy heart with this ſin of rebellion, you that are guilty of this ſin of murmuring are this day, by the Lord, charged as being guilty of rebellion againſt him, and God expects that when you go home you ſhould humble your ſouls before him for this ſin, that you ſhould charge your ſouls for being guilty of rebellion againſt God: many of you may ſay, I never thought that I had been a Rebel againſt God before, I thought that I had many infirmities, but now I ſee the Scripture ſpeaks of ſin in another manner

ner than men do, the Scripture makes men (though but murmurers) to be Rebels against God, Oh! this rebellious heart that I have against the Lord, that hath manifested it's self in this way of murmuring against the Lord! That is a third particular in the evil of discontentment.

A fourth particular in the evil of discontentment, *It is a wickedness that is exceeding contrarie to grace, and especially contrarie to the work of God, in bringing of the soul home to himself*; I know no distemper more opposite and contrarie to the work of God in conversion of a sinner, than this is.

Quest. *What is the work of God when he brings a sinner home to himself?*

Answ. The usual way is, for God to make the soul to see and be sensible of the dreadfull evil that there is in sin, and the great breach that sin hath made between God and it; for certainly Jesus Christ can never be known in his beauty and excellencie till the soul know that. I do not speak what secret work of the holy Ghost there may be in the soul, but before the soul can actually apply Jesus Christ to its self, it is impossible but it must come to know the evil of sin, and the excellencie of Jesus Christ: there may be a seed of Faith put into the soul, but the soul must first know Christ, and know sin, and be made sensible of it. Now how contrarie is this sin of murmuring to any such work of God? hath God made me see the dreadfull evil of sin, and made my soul to be sensible of the evil of sin as the greatest burden? how can I then be so much troubled for every affliction? Certainly if I saw what the evil of sin were, that sight would swallow up all other evils, and if I were burdened with the evil of sin, it would swallow up all other burdens; what am I now murmuring against Gods hand (saith such a soul) when as a while ago the Lord made me see my self to be a damned wretch, and apprehend it as a wonder that I am not in Hell?

2. Yea, it is mighty contrarie to the sight of the infinit excellencie and glorie of Jesus Christ, and the things of the Gospel. What am I that soul that the Lord hath discovered such infinit Excellencie of Jesus Christ to? and yet shall I think such a little affliction to be so grievous to me, when I have had the sight of such glorie in Christ that is more worth than ten thousand Worlds? (for so will a true convert say) Oh! the Lord at such a time hath given me that sight of Christ that I would not be without for ten thousand thousand Worlds; but hath God given thee that, and wilt thou be discontent for a trifle in comparison of that?

3. A third work, when God brings the soul home to himself, it is, *By taking the heart off from the Creature, the disingaging the heart from all Creature-comforts*: That is the third work ordinarily that the soul may perceive of its self. It is true, Gods work may be altogether in the seeds in him, but in the several actings of the soul in turning to God it may perceive these things in it; the disingagement of the heart from the Creature, that is the calling off the soul from the World, *whom the Lord hath called he hath justified*: what is the calling of the soul but this, the soul that was before seeking for Contentment in the World, and cleaving to the Creature, now the Lord calls the soul out of the World, and saith, Oh soul, thy happiness is not here, thy

reſt is not here, thy happineſs is elſe-where, and thy heart muſt be looſned from all theſe things that are here below in the World; and this is the work of God in the ſoul to disingage the heart from the creature, and how contrarie is a murmuring heart to ſuch a thing; a thing that is glued to another you cannot take off, but you muſt rend it; ſo it is a ſign thy heart is glued to the World, that when God would take thee off, thy heart rends, if God by an affliction ſhould come to take any thing in the World from thee, if thou canſt part from it with eaſe without rending, it is a ſign then that thy heart is not glued to the World.

4. A fourth work of God in the converting of a ſinner, is this, *The caſting of the ſoul upon Jeſus Chriſt for all it's good:* I ſee Jeſus Chriſt in the Goſpel the Fountain of all good, and God out of free grace tendering him to me for life, and for ſalvation, and now my ſoul caſts its ſelf, rols its ſelf upon the infinite grace of God in Chriſt for all good; now haſt thou done ſo? hath God converted thee, and drawn thee to his Son to caſt thy ſoul upon him for all thy good, and yet thou diſcontented for the want of ſome little matter in a creature-comfort? art thou he that hath caſt thy ſoul upon Jeſus Chriſt for all good? as he ſaith in another caſe, Is this thy Faith?

5. *The ſoul is ſubdued to God*; and then it comes to receive Jeſus Chriſt as a King, to rule, to order and diſpoſe of him how he pleaſes, and ſo the heart is ſubdued unto God. Now how oppoſite is a murmuring diſcontented heart to a heart ſubdued to Jeſus Chriſt as a King, and receiving him as a Lord to rule and diſpoſe of him as he pleaſes.

6. There is in the work of thy turning to God, the giving up of thy ſelf to God in an everlaſting Covenant: as thou takeſt Chriſt the Head of the Covenant to be thine, ſo thou giveſt up thy ſelf to Chriſt; In the work of converſion, there is the reſignation of the ſoul wholly to God in an everlaſting Covenant to be his; haſt thou ever ſurrendred up thy ſelf to God in an everlaſting Covenant? then certainly this thy fretting, murmuring heart is mighty oppoſite to it, certainly thou forgetteſt this Covenant of thine, and the reſignation of thy ſelf up to God; It would be a mervellous help to you, to humble your ſouls when you are in a murmuring condition; if you could but obtain ſo much liberty of your own ſpirits, as to look back to ſee what the work of God was in converting you, there is nothing would prevail more than to think of that. I am now in a murmuring diſcontented way, But how did I feel my ſoul working when God did turn my ſoul to himſelf? Oh! how oppoſite is this to that work, and how unbeſeeming? Oh! what ſhame and confuſion would come upon the ſpirits of men and women, if they could but compare the work of corruption in their murmuring and diſcontent, with the work of God that was upon their ſouls in converſion? Now we ſhould labour to keep the work of God upon our ſouls that was at our converſion; for converſion muſt not be onely at one inſtant at firſt, men are deceived in this, if they think their converſion is finiſhed meerly at firſt, thou muſt be in a way of converſion to God all the dayes of thy life: and therefore Chriſt ſaith to his Diſciples, Except ye be converted, and become as little children: *Ye be converted:* why, were they not converted before? Yes, they were converted, but they were

to

ſo continue the work of converſion all the dayes of their lives, and what work of God there is at the firſt converſion, it is to abide afterwards. As thus, Always there muſt abide ſome ſight and ſence of ſin, it may be not in the way which you had, which was rather a preparation than any thing elſe; but the ſight and ſence of ſin it is to continue ſtill, that is, you are ſtill to be ſenſible of the burden of ſin, as it is againſt the holineſs and goodneſs and mercie of God unto thee, and the ſight of the excellencie of Jeſus Chriſt is to continue, and thy calling out of the creature, and thy caſting of thy ſoul upon Chriſt as a King, ſtill receive him day by day; and the ſubduing of thy heart, and the ſurrendring of thy ſelf up to God in a way of Covenant; now if this were but dayly continued, there would be no ſpace nor time for murmuring to work upon thy heart, That is the fourth particular.

The fifth thing in the evil of diſcontentment, *Murmuring and diſcontentment is exceedingly below a Chriſtian*; Oh! it is too mean and baſe a diſtemper for a Chriſtian to give place to it. Now it is below a Chriſtian in many reſpects.

1. How, below the relation of a Chriſtian? The relation in which thou ſtandeſt. With what relation (you will ſay?)

Firſt, The relation thou ſtandeſt in to God: Doeſt not thou call God thy Father? and doeſt not thou ſtand in relation to him as a child? what, thou murmur? In 2. *Sam.* 13. 4. It is a ſpeech of *Jonadab* to *Amnon*, *Why art thou, being the Kings Son, lean from day to day, wilt thou not tell me?* and ſo he told him; (but that was for a wicked cauſe) he perceived that his ſpirit was troubled, for otherwiſe he was of a fat and plump temper of body, but becauſe of trouble of ſpirit he was even pin'd away, why, what's the matter? thou that ſtandeſt in this relation to the King, & yet any thing ſhould trouble thy heart? (that is his meaning) is there any thing that ſhould diſquiet thy heart, and yet ſtandeſt in ſuch a relation to the King, the Kings Son? So I may ſay to a Chriſtian, Art thou the Kings Son, the Son, the daughter of the King of Heaven, and yet ſo diſquieted and troubled, and vext at every little thing that fals out? as if a Kings Son ſhould crie out, he is undone for loſing a bauble, what an unworthy thing were this? So doeſt thou, thou crieſt out as if thou were undone, and yet a Kings Son, thou that ſtandeſt in ſuch relation to God, as unto a Father, thou doeſt diſhonour thy Father in this; as if ſo be either he had not wiſdom, or not power, or not mercie enough to provide for thee.

2. *The relation that thou ſtandeſt in to Jeſus Chriſt, thou art the ſpouſe of Chriſt:* what! one married to Jeſus Chriſt & yet troubled and diſcontented. Haſt thou not enough in him? doth not Chriſt ſay to his ſpouſe, as *Elkanah* ſaid to *Hannah*, (1. *Sam.* 1. 8. *Am not I better to thee than ten Sons?* So doth not Chriſt thy Husband ſay to thee, Am not I better to thee than thouſands of riches & comforts? ſuch comforts as thou murmureſt for want of; hath not God given thee his Son? and will he not with him give thee all things? hath the love of God been to thee to give thee his Son in way of Marriage? why art thou diſcontented and murmuring? conſider thy relation to Jeſus Chriſt, as thou art a ſpouſe and Married to him, his Perſon is thine, and ſo all the riches of Jeſus Chriſt is thine; as the riches of a Husband are the wives, and

though there are ſome husbands ſo vile as the wives may be forced to ſue for maintainance; certainly Jeſus Chriſt will never deny maintainance to his ſpouſe: it's a diſhonor for a Husband to have his Wife go whining up and down; what, thou art match'd with Chriſt and art his Spouſe, and wilt thou murmur now and be diſcontented in thy ſpirit? You ſhall obſerve among thoſe that are newly matched, when there is diſcontent between the wife and the husband, their friends will ſhake their heads, and ſay, they do not meet with that that they did expect, ye ſee ever ſince they were married together how the man looks, and the woman looks, they are not ſo cheerly as they were wont to be, ſurely (ſay they) it is like to prove an ill match. But it is not ſo here, it ſhall not be ſo between thee & Chriſt: Oh! Jeſus Chriſt doth not love to ſee his ſpouſe to have a lowring countenance: no man loves to ſee diſcontentment in the face of his wife, ſurely Chriſt doth not love to ſee diſcontentment in the face of his ſpouſe.

3. *Thou ſtandeſt in relation to Chriſt* not onely as a ſpouſe, but as a *Member, Thou art bone of his bone, and fleſh of his fleſh*; and to have a Member of Jeſus Chriſt to be in ſuch a condition, it is exceeding unworthy.

4. *He is thy elder brother likewiſe, and ſo thou art a Co heir with him.*

5. *The relation that thou ſtandeſt in to the Spirit of God*, thou art the Temple of the holy Ghoſt, the holy Ghoſt is thy comforter, it is he that is appointed to convey all comfort from the Father and the Son, to the ſouls of his people. And art thou the Temple of the holy Ghoſt, and doth he dwell in thee, and yet for all that thou murmur for every little matter?

6. *The relation that thou ſtandeſt in to the Angels, thou art made one body with them:* for ſo Chriſt hath joyned principalities and powers with his Church, they are miniſtring ſpirits for good to his people, to ſupply what they need, and thou, and they are joyned together, and Chriſt is the head of you and Angels.

7. *The relation that you ſtand in to the Saints, you are of the ſame body with them*, they and you make up but one myſtical body with Jeſus Chriſt, and if they be happy, you muſt needs be happy; Oh! how beneath a Chriſtian is a murmuring ſpirit, if he conſiders his relations in which he ſtands.

Secondly, A Chriſtian ſhould conſider, *That murmuring and diſcontentedneſs is below the high dignities that God hath put upon him:* Do but conſider the high dignitie that God hath put upon thee; the meaneſt Chriſtian in the World is a Lord of Heaven and earth; he hath made us Kings unto himſelf, Kings unto God, not Kings unto men to rule over them, and yet, I ſay, every Chriſtian is Lord of Heaven and earth, yea, of life and death. That is, as Chriſt he is Lord of all, ſo he hath made thoſe that are his Members to be Lords of all: All are yours ſaith the Apoſtle, even life and death, every thing is yours. It is a very ſtrange expreſſion that death ſhould be theirs, Death is yours, that is, you are as it were Lords over it, you have that that ſhall make death to be your ſervant, your ſlave, even death its ſelf, your greateſt enemies are turned to be your ſlaves. Faith makes a Chriſtian to be as Lord over all, to be lifted up in excellencie above all creatures that ever God made, except the Angels, yea, and in ſome reſpect above them, I ſay, the pooreſt Chriſtian that lives, is raiſed

to an estate above all the Creatures in the World, except Angels, yea, and above them in divers respects too, and yet discontented, that thou, who wert as a fire-brand of Hell, and might have been scorching and yelling and roaring there to all eternity, yet that God should raise thee to have a higher excellency in thee than there is in all the works of Creation that ever he made, except Angels, and other Christians that are in thy condition, yea, and thou art neerer the Divine Nature than the Angels, because thy nature is joyned in an hypostatical Union to the Divine nature, and in that respect thy nature is more honoured than the nature of the Angels. And the death of Christ is thine, he died for thee, and not for the Angels, and therefore thou art like to be raised above the Angels in divers respects: yea, thou that art in such an estate as this is, thou that art set apart to the end, that God might manifest to all eternity what the infinite power of a Deity is able to raise a creature too; for that is the condition of a Saint, a believer, his condition is such as he is set apart to the end that God might manifest to all eternity what his infinite power is able to do to make the creature happy; art thou in such a condition? Oh! how low and beneath this condition is a murmuring and discontented heart for want of some outward comforts here in this World: How unseemly is it that thou shouldest be a slave to every cross, that every affliction shall be able to say to thy soul, Bow down to us: We accounted that a great slavery, when men would say to our souls, Bow down: As the cruel Prelates were wont to do in imposing things upon mens consciences, they did in effect say, Let your consciences, your souls bow down to us, that we may tread upon them; that is the greatest slavery in the World, that one man should say to another, let your consciences, your souls bow down that we may tread upon them; but wilt thou suffer every affliction to say, bow down that we may tread upon thee? Truly it is so, when thy heart is overcome with murmuring and discontent: Know, that those afflictions which have caused thee to murmur, have said to thee, Bow down that we may tread upon thee; nay, not afflictions, but the very Devil doth prevail against you in this: Oh! how beneath is this to the happy estate that God hath raised a Christian unto! What! the son of a King, shall he have every base fellow to come and bid him bow down, that he may tread upon his neck? thus doest thou in every affliction: the affliction, the cross, and trouble that doth befall thee, saith, Bow down that we may come and tread upon thee.

Thirdly, *Murmuring it is below the spirit of a Christian.* Below his spirit, the spirit of every Christian should be like the spirit of his Father; every Father loves to see his spirit in his child, loves to see his image, not the image of his body onely, to say, here is a child for all the World like the Father, but he hath the spirit of his Father too: a Father that is a man of spirit, loves to see his spirit in his child, rather than the feature of his body; Oh! the Lord that is our Father, loves to see his spirit in us: Great men love to see great spirits in their children; and the great God loves to see a great spirit in his children; we are one spirit with God, and with Christ, and one spirit with the holy Ghost, therefore we should have a spirit that might manifest the glorie of the Father, Son, and holy Ghost in our spirits; that is the spirit of a Christian indeed.

The ſpirit of a Chriſtian ſhould be a Lion-like ſpirit, as Jeſus Chriſt is the Lion of the Tribe of *Judah* (ſo he is call'd;) ſo we ſhould manifeſt ſomewhat of the Lion-like ſpirit of Jeſus Chriſt; he manifeſted his Lion-like ſpirit in paſſing through all afflictions, and troubles whatſoever without any murmuring againſt God: When he came to drink that bitter cup, and even the dregs of it, he prayed to God (indeed) that if it were poſſible it might paſs from him, but preſently, Not my will, but thy will be done: As ſoon as ever he did mention the paſſing of the cup from him, (though it were the moſt dreadfull cup that ever was drunk ſince the World began, yet at the mentioning of it) not my will, but thy will be done; here Chriſt ſhewed a Lion-like ſpirit, in going through all kind of afflictions whatſoever without any murmuring againſt God in them: Now a murmuring ſpirit is a baſe dejected ſpirit, croſs and contrarie to the ſpirit of a Chriſtian, and it is very baſe. I remember that the Heathens accounted it very baſe, *Plutarch* doth report of a certain people that did uſe to manifeſt their diſdain to men that were overmuch dejected by any affliction, they did condemn them to this puniſhment, To wear womens cloaths all their dayes, or ſuch a ſpace of time at leaſt they ſhould go in womans cloaths in token of ſhame and diſgrace to them, becauſe they had ſuch effeminate ſpirits, they thought it againſt a manlike ſpirit, and therefore ſeeing they did un-man themſelves, they ſhould go as women. Now ſhall they account it an un-manlike ſpirit, to be overmuch dejected in afflictions; and ſhall not a Chriſtian account it an unchriſtian-like ſpirit to be overmuch dejected by any affliction whatſoever? I remember another compares murmuring ſpirits to children when they are weaning, What a deal of ſtir have you with your children when you wean them? how froward and vexing are they? So when God would wean thee from ſome outward comforts in this World, Oh how fretting and diſcontented art thou! Children will not ſleep themſelves, nor let their mothers ſleep when they are weaning; and ſo when God would wean us from the World, and we fret, vex, and murmur, this is a childiſh ſpirit.

Fourthly, *It is below the profeſſion of a Chriſtian.* The profeſſion of a Chriſtian, what is that? A Chriſtians profeſſion is, To be dead to the World, and to be alive to God, that is his profeſſion, to have his life to be hid with Chriſt in God, to ſatisfie himſelf in God; What, is this thy profeſſion? and yet if thou haſt not every thing that thou wouldeſt have to murmur and be diſcontent, thou doeſt in that even deny thy profeſſion.

Fifthly, *It is below that ſpecial grace of Faith.* Faith is that that doth overcome the World, it is that that makes all the promiſes of God to be ours: Now when thou tookeſt upon thee the profeſſion of Religion, Did God ever promiſe thee that thou ſhouldeſt live at eaſe, and quiet, and have no trouble? I remember *Auſtin* hath ſuch an expreſſion, What is this thy Faith? what did I ever promiſe thee, (ſaith he) that thou ſhouldeſt ever flouriſh in the World? art thou a Chriſtian to that end? and is this thy Faith? I never made any ſuch promiſe to thee when thou tookeſt upon thee to be a Chriſtian: Oh it is mighty contrarie to thy profeſſion, thou haſt never a promiſe for this, that thou ſhouldeſt not have ſuch an affliction upon thee: And a Chriſtian ſhould live by his faith;

faith; it is said, that the just do live by faith; now thou shouldest not look after any other life but the life that thou hast by faith; now thou hast no ground for thy faith, to believe that thou shouldest be delivered out of such an affliction; and then, why shouldest thou account it such a great evil to be under such an affliction? Certainly that good that we have in the ground for our faith, it is enough to content our hearts here, and to all eternitie: A Christian should be satisfied with that that God hath made to be the object of his faith, the object of his faith is high enough to satisfie his soul, were it capable of a thousand times more than it is: Now if thou mayst have the object of thy faith full, thou hast enough to content thy soul: and know, that when thou art discontented for want of such and such comforts, if thou wouldest but think thus, God did never promise me that I should have these comforts, and at this time, and in such a way as I would have, but I am discontented because I have not these which God did never yet promise me, and therefore I sin much against the Gospel, and against the Grace of Faith.

There is yet another thing, It's below the hope of Christians: Oh! the most glorious things that the Saints hope for.

And against the helps that the Christians have. Christians have great helps that may help them against murmuring.

And it is against that which God expects from Christians. God he expects other manner of things from them than this.

Yea, and it is below that that God hath from other Christians. These things I shall open at another time.

Sermon VIII.

Philippians 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

Sept. 21. 1646.

I Mentioned divers things the last day, to set out the evil of discontent; I shall name two or three more.

Sixthly, It is below a Christian in this, *Because it's below those helps that a Christian hath more than others have*; they have the Promises to help them that others have not; it's not so much to have a *Nabal* have his heart sink, because he hath nothing but the creature to uphold him, but it's much for a Christian that hath Promises and Ordinances, to uphold his spirit which others have not.

Seventhly,

Seventhly, *It's below the expectation that God hath of Christians*, for God expects not onely that they ſhould be patient in afflictions, but that they ſhould rejoyce and triumph in them: now Chriſtians, when God expects this from you, for you not ſo much as to have attained to contentedneſs under afflictions, Oh! this is beneath the expectation of God from you.

Eighthly, *It is below that that God hath had from other Chriſtians.* Others have not onely been contented with little croſſes, but they have triumphed under great afflictions, they have ſuffered the ſpoiling of their goods with joy, read but the latter part of the 11. of the *Hebrews*, and you ſhall find what great things God hath had from his people, and therefore not to be content with ſmaller croſſes, this muſt needs be a great evil.

The Sixth evil that there is in a murmuring ſpirit, is this, *By murmuring you undo your prayers, for it is exceeding contrary to the prayers that you make to God*: When you come to prayer to God, you acknowledge his Sovereignty over you, you come there to profeſs your ſelves to be at Gods diſpoſe, what do you pray for, except you acknowledge that you are at his diſpoſe, except you will ſtand (as it were) at his diſpoſe, never come to petition to him, if you will come to petition him, and yet will be your own carver, you go croſs to your prayers to come as if you would beg your bread at your Fathers gates every day, and yet you muſt do what you liſt, this is the undoing of the prayers of a Chriſtian. I remember I have read of *Latimer* that ſpeaking concerning *Peter* that denied his Maſter (ſaith he) *Peter* forgot his *Pater noſter*, for that was *Hallowed be thy Name*, and *thy Kingdom come*: So we may ſay, when you have murmuring and diſcontented hearts, you forget your prayers, you forget what you have prayed for, for you muſt make the Lords Prayer to be as a pattern for your prayers, though you ſay not alwaies the ſame words, what do you pray, *but give us this day our dayly bread*? for that's Chriſts intention that we ſhould have that as a pattern, and is a directory (as it were) how to make our prayers; now God doth not teach any of you to pray, Lord give me ſo much a year, or let me have ſuch kind of cloth, and ſo many diſhes at my table, Chriſt doth not teach you to pray ſo; but he teaches us to pray, *Lord, give us our bread*, ſhewing, that you ſhould be content with a little: What, have you not bread to eat? I hope there's none of you here but have that.

Object. But I do not know if I ſhould die what ſhould become of my children: Or if I have bread now, I know not where I ſhall have it the next week, or where I ſhall have proviſion for the winter.

Anſw. Where did Chriſt teach us to pray, Lord, give us proviſion for ſo long a time? no, but if we have bread for this day, Chriſt would have us content: Therefore when we murmur becauſe we have not ſo much variety as others have, we do (as it were) forget our *Pater noſter*; It's againſt our prayers, we do not in our lives hold forth the acknowledgement of the Sovereignty of God over us, we ſeem to acknowledge in our prayers; therefore when at any time you find your hearts murmuring, then do but reflect upon your ſelves and think thus, Is this according to my prayers, wherein I held forth the Sovereign Power and Authority that God had over me?

The

The Seventh thing that I add for the evil of discontentment, is, *The wofull effects that comes to a discontented heart from murmuring.* I'le name you five: There are five evil effects that comes from a murmuring spirit.

1. *By murmuring and discontent in your hearts, you come to lose a great deal of time*; How many times do men and women, when they are discontented, let their thoughts run, and are musing and contriving through their present discontentednes; then let their discontented thoughts be working in them for some hours together, and they spend their time in vain. When you are alone, you should spend your time in holy meditation, but you are spending your time in discontented thoughts; you who complain that you cannot meditate, you cannot think on good things, but if you begin to think of them, a little, presently your thoughts are off from them, but if you be discontented with any thing, then you can go alone, and muse, and roul things up and down in your thoughts to feed a discontented humour: Oh labour to see this evil effect of murmuring, the losing of your time.

2. *It doth unfit you for dutie:* A man or woman that is in a contented frame, you may turn such a one to any thing at any time, he is fit for to go to God at any time; but when one is in a discontented condition, then a man or woman is exceeding unfit for the service of God. And it causes many distractions in dutie, it unfits for dutie, and when you come to perform duties, Oh the distractions that are in your duties, when your spirits are discontented; when you hear of any ill news from Sea and cannot bear it, or of any ill from a friend, or any loss or cross, Oh what distractions do they cause in the performance of holy duties! When you should be in enjoying communion with God, you are distracted in your thoughts about the cross that hath befallen you, whereas had you but a quiet spirit, though there should great crosses befall you, yet they would never hinder you in the performance of any dutie.

3. *Consider what wicked risings of heart, and resolutions of spirit there are many times in a discontented fit.* In some discontented fits the heart rises against God, and against others, and sometimes hath even desperate resolutions what to do to help themselves. If the Lord should have suffered you to have done, (sometimes in a discontented fit) what you had thought to do, what wonderfull miserie had you brought upon your selves! Oh it was a mercie of God that did stop you, had not God stopt you, but let you go on when you thought to help your selves this way, and the other way, Oh it had been ill with you, do you but remember those risings of heart and wicked resolutions that sometimes you have had in a discontented mood, and learn to be humbled upon that.

4. *Unthankfulnes, that's an evil and a wicked effect that comes from discontent.* Unthankfulnes the Scripture doth rank among very great sins. For men and women that are discontent, though they enjoy many mercies from God, yet they are thankfull for none of them, for this is the vile nature of discontentment, to lessen every mercy of God, to make those mercies they have from God to be as nothing to them, because they have not what they would have. Sometimes it's so even in spirituall things, if they have not all they would have, the comforts that they would have, then what they have

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is nothing to them, do you think that God will take this well? if you ſhould give a friend, a kinſman, a purſe of money to go and trade withall, and he ſhould come and ſay, What do you give me? they are but a few counters, they will do me no good: you cannot bear this at his hand if he ſhould do ſo, becauſe he hath not ſo much money as he would. So for you to be readie to ſay, All that God hath given me is nothing worth, will do me no good, they are but counters; though they are the precious Graces of Gods Spirit that are more worth than thouſands of worlds, yet for you to ſay they are nothing, they are but common gifts, and all is but in hypocriſie, all counterfeit, Oh what an unthankfull thing is this! the Graces of Gods Spirit are nothing to a diſcontented heart that hath not all that it would have; and ſo for outward bleſſings, though God hath given you health of bodie, and ſtrength, and hath given you ſome competencie for your familie, ſome way of livelyhood, yet becauſe you are disappointed in ſomewhat that you would have, therefore all is nothing unto you; Oh what unthankfulneſs is here? God expects that every day you ſhould ſpend ſome time in bleſſing his Name for what mercie he hath granted unto you, ther's not any one of you, who are in the loweſt condition, but you have abundance of mercies to bleſs God for, but diſcontentedneſs makes them nothing. It's an excellent ſpeech that I remember *Luther* hath, (ſaith he) This is the Rhetorick of the Spirit of God, (it's a very fine ſpeech of his) to extenuate evil things, and to amplifie good things; if there falls out a croſs, to make the croſs to be but little, but if there be a mercie to make the mercie to be great; as thus, If there be a croſs, if the Spirit of God prevails in the heart, ſuch a man or woman will wonder that it is no greater, and will bleſs God, that though there be ſuch a croſs, yet that it is no more; that's the work of the Spirit of God; and if there be a mercie, wonders at Gods goodneſs that God granted ſo great a mercie: The Spirit of God extenuates evils and croſſes, and doth magnifie and amplifie all mercies, and makes all mercies ſeem to be great, and all afflictions ſeem to be little. But (ſaith he) the Devil goes quite contrarie, the Rhetorick of the Devil is quite otherwiſe, he doth leſſen Gods mercies, and amplifie evil things, as thus; A godly man wonders at his croſs that it is no more, a wicked man wonders his croſs is ſo much; Oh! (ſaith he) none was ever ſo afflicted as I am? If there be a croſs, the Devil puts the ſoul upon muſing on it, and making it greater than it is, and ſo it brings diſcontent: And then on the other ſide, if there be a mercie, then it's the Rhetorick of the Devil to leſſen the mercie, I indeed (ſaith he) the thing is a good thing, but what is it? it is no great matter, & for all this I may be miſerable. Thus the Rhetorick of Satan doth leſſen Gods mercies, and doth encreaſe afflictions: And for this Ile give you a notable example that we have in Scripture, it is the example of *Korah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, in Numb. 16. 12, 13. *And* Moſes *ſent to call* Dathan *and* Abiram *the ſons of* Eliab: *which ſaid, We will not come up. Is it a ſmall thing that thou haſt brought us up out of a Land that floweth with milk & honey, to kill us in the wildernes, except thou make thy ſelf altogether a Prince over us?* Mark, they ſlighted the Land that they were going unto, the Land of *Canaan*, that was the Land that God promiſed them that ſhould flow with milk and honey: But mark here their diſcontentedneſs, becauſe they met with

with some troubles in the wilderness; Oh! it was to slay them, they made their affliction in the wilderness to be greater than it was, Oh! it was to kill them, though it were indeed to carry them to the Land of *Canaan*. But now their deliverance from Egypt though it was a great mercy, they made that mercy to be nothing, for say they, You have brought us out of a Land that floweth with milk and hony, what Land was that? It was the Land of Egypt, the Land of their bondage, but they call it a Land that floweth with milk and hony, though it were the Land of their most cruel and unsupportable bondage; whereas they should have blessed God as long as they had liv'd, for Gods delivering them out of the Land of Egypt, yet meeting with some cross they make their deliverance from Egypt no mercy, no, it was rather a misery to them, Oh! (say they) Egypt was a Land that floweth with milk and honie. oh what baseness is there in a discontented spirit, a discontented spirit out of envy to Gods Grace will make mercies that are great to be little, yea, to be none at all. Would one ever have thought that such a word should have come from the mouth of an Israelite that had been under bondage, and cried under it, and yet when they meet with a little cross in their way, to say, you have brought us out of the Land that floweth with milk and honie, to say they were better before than now, and yet before they could not be contented neither; this is the usuall unthankfull expression of a discontented heart: And it is so with us now when we meet with any cross in our estates, any taxations and trouble, especially if any among you have been where the enemy hath prevailed, you are ready to say, We had plenty before, and we are now brought to a condition of hardship, we were better before when we had the Prelats and others to domineer, and so we indanger our selves to be brought into that bondage again; Oh! let us take heed of this, of a discontented heart, there is this wofull cursed fruit of discontent to make men and women unthankfull for all the mercies God hath granted to them, and this is a sore and grievous evil.

And lastly, *There's this evil effect in murmuring, It causes shiftings of spirit:* they that murmur and are discontent, are liable to temptations, to shift for themselves in sinfull and ungodly ways; discontent is the ground of shifting courses and unlawfull ways. How many of you may have your consciences condemn you of this, that you in the time of your afflictions have sought to shift for your selves by ways that have been sinfull against God, and your discontent was the bottom and ground of it? If you would avoid shiftings for your selves by wicked ways, labour to mortifie this sin of discontent, to mortifie it at the root.

The Eighth evil that there is in murmuring and discontent is this, *There is a great deal of folly, extream folly in a discontented heart, it's a foolish sin.* I shall open the folly of it in many particulars.

1. *It takes away the present comfort of what you have, because you have not somewhat that you would have.* What a foolish thing is this, that because I have not what I would have, I will not enjoy the comfort of what I have? Do not you account this folly in your children, you give them some victualls and they are not contented, perhaps (they say) it's not enough, they cry for more, and

and if you do not presently give them more, they will throw away that they have, and though you account that folly in your children, yet you deal thus with God; God gives you many enemies, but you see others have more mercies than you, and therefore you cry for more: I but God gives you not what you would have, and upon that you throw away what you have. Is not this folly in your hearts? It is unthankfulness.

2. There's a great deal of folly in discontentment, for *by all your discontent you cannot help your selves*, you cannot get any thing by it. Who can by taking any carking care *add one cubit to his stature, or make one hair that is white, to be black*? You may vex & trouble your selves, but you can get nothing by it. Do you think that the Lord will come in a way of mercie ever a whit the sooner because of the murmuring of your spirits? Oh no, but mercy will be rather deferred the longer for it; though the Lord were before in a way of mercie, yet this distemper of your hearts were enough to put him out of his course of mercy, and though he had thoughts that you should have the thing before, yet now you shall not have it. If you had a mind to give such a thing to your child, yet if you see him in a discontented fretting way you will not give it him; and this is the very reason why there are so many mercies denied to you, because of your discontentment, your are discontented for want of them, and therefore you have them not, you do deprive your selves of the enjoyment of your own desires because of the discontentment of your hearts, because you have not your desires. And is not this a foolish thing?

3. There's a great deal of follie in this, *There are many foolish carriages, commonly, that a discontented heart is guilty of: They carry themselves foolishly towards God and towards men*; there are such expressions, and such kind of behaviour comes from them, as makes their friends to be ashamed of them manie times; their carriages are so unseemly, they are a shame to themselves & their friends.

4. *There is a great deal of folly in discontent and murmuring; for it doth eat out the good and sweetness of a mercy before it comes.* If God should give a mercie that we are discontented for the want of, yet the blessing of the mercie is as it were eaten out before we come to have it. Discontent is like a worm that eats the meat out of the Nut, and then when the meat is eaten out of it, then you shall have the shell. If a child should crie for a Nut that hath the meat eaten out, or all worm-eaten, what good would the child have by having the Nut? so such an outward comfort you would fain have, and you are troubled for the want of it, but the very trouble of your spirits is the worm that eats out the blessing of the mercy, & then perhaps God gives it you, but gives you it with a curse mixed with it, that you were better not have it, than have it. That man or woman that is discontented for want of some good thing, if God doth give that good thing to them before they be humbled for their discontent that did proceed from them, such a man or woman can have no comfort of the mercy, but it will be rather an evil than a good to them: And therefore for my part, if I should have a friend or brother, or one that were as dear to me as my own soul, that I should see discontented for the want of such a comfort, I should rather pray, Lord keep this thing from them, till thou wilt be pleased to humble their hearts for their discontent, let not them have the mercy, till they come

come to be humbled for their discontent for the want of it, for if they have it before that time, they will have it without any blessing: And therefore it should be your care, when you find your hearts discontented for want of any thing, to be humbled for it, thinking thus with your selves; Lord, if that that I do so immoderately desire should come to me before I be humbled for my discontent for want of it, I am certain I can have no comfort of it, but I shall rather have it as an affliction to me. Many things which you desire as your lives, and think that you should be happy if you had them, yet when they do come you find not such happiness in them, but they prove to be the greatest crosses and afflictions to you that ever you had, and upon this ground, because your hearts were immoderately set upon them before you had them. As it was with *Rachel*, she must have children or else she died; well, saith God, seeing you *must*, you shall have them, but though she had a child she died according to what she said, *Give me children, or else I die.* So in regard of any other outward comforts, people may have the thing: but often times they have it so as it proves the heaviest cross to them that ever they had in all their lives, such a child as you were discontent for the want of it, it may be it was sick, and your hearts were out of temper for fear that you should lose it, and God restores it, but he restores it so as he makes it a cross to your hearts all the dayes of your lives. One observes concerning *Manna*, when the people were contented with their allowance that God allowed them, then it was very good, but when they would not be content with Gods allowance, but would gather more than God would have them; then (saith the Text) there was worms in it: So when we are content with our conditions, and that which God disposes of us to be in, there is a blessing in it, then it is sweet to us, but if we must needs have more, and keep it longer than God would have us to have it, then there will be worms in it, and no good at all.

5. *There is a great deal of folly in discontentedness, for it makes our afflictions a great deal worse than otherwise it would be*; it no way removes our affliction, nay, while they do continue they are a great deal the worse and heavier: for a discontented heart is a proud heart, and a proud heart will not pull down his sails when there comes a tempest and storm: If a Marriner when a tempest and storm comes should be froward and would not pull down his sails, but is discontented with the storm, Is his condition the better because he is discontented and will not pull down his sails? Will this help him? Just so it is, for all the world, with a discontented heart, a discontented heart is a proud heart, and he out of his pride is troubled with his affliction, and is not contented with Gods dispose, and so he will not pull down his spirit at all, and make it bow to God in this condition in which God hath brought him; now is his condition the better because he will not pull down his spirit? No certainly, abundantly worse, a thousand to one but the tempest and storm over-whelms his soul. And thus you see what a great deal of folly there is in the sin of discontentment.

The Ninth Evil of murmuring and discontentment is this, *There is a mighty deal of danger in the sin of discontentment, for it exceedingly provoketh the wrath of God*; it is a sin that doth much provoke God against his creature; we find

find moſt ſad expreſſions in Scripture (and examples too) how God hath been provoked againſt many for their diſcontent; in *Numb.* 14. you have a notable text, and one would think that that were enough for ever to make you fear murmuring, in the 26. verſe, it is ſaid, *The Lord ſpake unto* Moſes *and unto* Aaron *ſaying*, what did he ſay? *How long ſhall I bear with this evil Congregation which murmur againſt me?* How long ſhall I bear with them ſaith God, *This evil Congregation*; Oh it's an evil Congregation that murmur againſt me! And how long ſhall I bear with them? they do murmur, and they have murmured: as thoſe that have murmuring ſpirits, and murmuring diſpoſitions, they will murmur again, and again; *How long ſhall I bear with this evil Congregation that murmur againſt me*? How juſtly may God ſpeak this of many of you that are this morning before the Lord, How long ſhall I bear with this wicked man or woman that doth murmur againſt me, and hath uſually in the courſe of their lives murmured againſt me when any thing falls out otherwiſe than they would have it? And mark what follows after, *I have heard the murmurings of the Children of Iſrael*: You murmur, it may be others hear you not, nay, it may be you ſpeak not at all, or but half-words, yet God hears the language of your murmuring hearts, and thoſe muttering ſpeeches, and thoſe half-words that comes from you. And obſerve further in this verſe, how the Lord repeats this ſin of murmuring, *How long ſhall I bear with this evil Congregation which murmur againſt me*? Secondly, *I have heard their murmuring*. Thirdly, *which they murmur againſt me: Murmur, murmur, murmur*, Three times in one verſe he repeats it; and this is to ſhew his indignation againſt the thing: When you expreſs indignation againſt a thing, you will repeat it over again, and again; now the Lord becauſe he would expreſs his indignation againſt this ſin, he repeats it over again, and again, and it follows in verſe 28. *Say unto them, as truly as I live ſaith the Lord, As ye have ſpoken in mine ears, ſo will I do to you.* Mark God ſwears againſt a murmurer; ſometimes in your diſcontent you will be ready to ſwear (it may be) do you ſwear in your diſcontent? So doth God ſwear againſt you for your diſcontent. And what was it that God would do unto them? verſe 29, 30. *Doubtleſs your carkaſes ſhall fall in the wilderneſs, and you ſhall not come into the Land concerning which I ſwear, to make you dwell therein*: as if God ſhould ſay, if I have any life in me, your lives ſhall go for it, as I live it ſhall coſt you your lives. A diſcontented murmuring ſit of yours may coſt you your lives. You ſee how it provokes God, there is more evil in it than you are aware of, it may coſt you your lives, and and therefore look to your ſelves, and learn to be humbled at the very beginnings of ſuch diſtempers in the heart. So in *Pſal* 106. 24, 25. *Yea, they deſpiſed the pleaſant Land, they believed not his word; but murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord; therefore he lifted up his hand againſt them to overthrow them in the wilderneſs.* Here are divers things obſervable in this Scripture.

First, That which we ſpoke to before, How a murmuring heart doth ſlight Gods mercies, ſo it is here, *They deſpiſed the pleaſant Land*: and that a murmuring heart is contrary to faith, *they believed not his word, but* (ſaith the text) *they murmured in their tents, and hearkened not to the voice of the Lord.*

Many

Many men and women will hearken to the voice of their own base murmuring hearts, that will not hearken to the voice of the Lord; if you would hearken to the voice of the Lord, there would not be such murmuring as there is: but mark what follows upon it, you may not think to please your selves in your murmuring discontentedness, and think that no evil shall come of it; *Therefore he lifted his hand against them to overthrow them*; you that are discontented, you lift up your hearts against God, and you cause God to lift up his hand against you; perhaps God laies his finger upon you softly in some afflictions that are upon you, in your families or else where, and you cannot bear the hand of God that lies upon you as tenderly, as a tender-hearted Nurse that laies her hand upon the child, you cannot bear the tender hand of God that is upon you in a lesser affliction; it were just with God to lift up his hand against you in another manner of affliction; Oh! a murmuring spirit provokes God exceedingly. There is another place in 16. of *Numb.* compare the 41. verse and the 46. verse together, *But on the morrow all the Congregation of the Children of* Israel *murmured against* Moses *and against* Aaron, *saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord:* & mark in the 46. verse, *And* Moses *said unto* Aaron, *Take a Censer and put fire therein from off the Altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the Congregation, and make an atonement for them, for there is wrath gone out from the Lord, the plague is begun*; mark how Gods wrath is kindled; in the 41. verse, the Congregation had murmured, and they murmured but against *Moses* and *Aaron*, (perhaps you murmur more directly against God) and that was against God in murmuring against Gods Ministers, it was against God, but not so directly; but it may be the murmuring of your hearts is more directly against Gods dealings with you, if you murmur against those that God makes instruments, (because you have not every thing that you would have) as against the Parliament, or such and such that are publick Instruments, it's against God; it was but against *Moses* and *Aaron* that the Israelites murmured, and they said that *Moses* and *Aaron* had killed the people of the Lord, though it was the hand of God that was upon them for their former wickedness in murmuring. It is usuall for wicked vile hearts to deal thus with God, that when Gods hand is a little upon them, for to murmur again and again, and so to bring upon themselves even infinite kind of evils; but now the anger of God was quickly kindled, Oh saith *Moses*, Go, take the Censer quickly, for wrath is gone out from Jehovah, the plague is begun: so while you are murmuring in your families, the wrath of God may quickly go out against you; quickly, in a morning or evening, when you are murmuring, the wrath of God may come quickly out upon your families or persons; you are never so prepared for present wrath, as when you are in a murmuring discontented fit, those that stand by and see you in a murmuring discontented fit, have cause to say, Oh! let us go and take the censer, let us go to prayer, for we are afraid that wrath is gone out against this family, against this person: And it were a verie good thing for thee that art a godly wife, when you see your husband come home and fall to murmuring, because things go not according to his desire, to go to prayer, and say, Lord pardon the sins of my husband, and so for the husband to go to God in prayer, falling down, and beseeching of him that wrath

may not come out againſt his family for the murmuring of his wife. And the truth is, at this day there hath been (at leaſt lately) as much murmuring in *England* as ever was, and even in this very particular the plague is begun, and this very judgement, it doth come many times upon murmuring, upon thoſe that are ſo diſcontented in their families, and are always grumbling and murmuring at any thing that fals out amiſs, (I ſay) this Text of Scripture in *Numbers* doth clearly hold forth this, That the Lord brings the plague upon men for this ſin of murmuring, he doth it in Kingdoms and families, and upon particular perſons. Though we cannot always point out the particular ſin that God brings this for, yet this ſhould be examined how far we are guilty of the ſin of murmuring; becauſe the Scripture holds forth this ſo clearly, that *Moſes* when he did but hear that they murmured, Do they murmur? (ſaith he) Go forth quickly, and ſeek to pacifie the anger of God, *For wrath is gone out, and the plague is begun.* And in 1. *Cor.* 10. 10. there you have a notable example of Gods heavy diſpleaſure againſt murmuring, *Neither murmur ye as ſome of them alſo murmured, and were deſtroyed of the deſtroyer.* Take heed of murmuring as ſome of them did, (he ſpeaks of the people of *Iſrael* in the wilderneſs,) but ſaith he, what came of it? *They were deſtroyed of the deſtroyer.* Now the deſtroyer is thought to be the fiery Serpents that were ſent among them: They murmured, and God ſent fiery Serpents to ſting them. What do you think that ſuch a croſs and affliction doth ſting you? Perhaps ſuch an affliction is upon you, and it ſeems to be grievous for the preſent, What? do you murmur and repine? God hath greater croſſes to bring upon you: Thoſe people that murmur for the want of outward comforts, for want of water, (ſometimes) and for the want of bread, they murmur, but the Lord ſends fiery Serpents among them. I may ſay to a murmuring heart, *wo to thee that ſtriveſt with thy Maker:* wo to that man, that woman, that ſtrives againſt their Maker; What doeſt thou elſe, but ſtrive againſt thy Maker? Thy Maker hath the abſolute diſpoſe of thee, and wilt thou ſtrive againſt thy Maker? What doth this murmuring diſcontented heart of thine do otherwiſe, but wrangle, and contend, and ſtrive even with God himſelf? Oh! wo to him that ſtrives againſt his Maker! I may further ſay to thee, as God ſpeaks to *Job*, *Job* 38. 1, 2. when *Job* was impatient, *Now God ſpake* (ſaith the Text) *out of the whirl-wind, and ſaid, who is this that darkeneth counſel by words without knowledge?* So, doeſt thou ſpeak againſt Gods ways, and his providences that hath fallen out concerning thy eſtate and outward comforts? who is this? *who is this that darkeneth counſel by words without knowledge?* Where is that man or woman whoſe hearts are ſo bold and impudent, as dares ſpeak againſt the adminiſtration of Gods providence?

The tenth evil of murmuring and diſcontent is this, *There is a great curſe of God upon it: ſo far as it doth prevail in one that is wicked, it hath the curſe of God upon it.* In *Pſal.* 59. 15. ſee there what the curſe of God is upon wicked and ungodly men, *Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not ſatisfied.* That is the imprecation and curſe upon wicked and ungodly men, that if they be not ſatisfied, they ſhall grudge; when thou art not ſatisfied in thy deſires, and findeſt thy heart grudging againſt God, apply this Scripture,

Scripture, What? is the curse of the wicked upon me? This is the curse that is threatned upon wicked and ungodly ones, That they shall grudge if they be not satisfied. And in *Deut.* 28.27. There it is threatned as a curse of God upon men, that they cannot be content with their present condition, *But they shall say in the morning, would God it were even; and at even, would God it were morning*; and so they lie tossing up and down, and cannot be content with any condition that they are in, because of the sore afflictions that be upon them; and therefore it is further threatned as a curse upon them, in the 34. vers. *That they should be mad for the sight of their eyes which they should see:* This is but the extremity of their discontentedness; that is, They shall be so discontented, as they shall be even mad. Many men and women in discontented moods are a mad kind of people, & though you may please your selves in such a mad kind of behaviour, yet know, that it is a curse of God upon men to be given up to a kind of madness for evils, that they suppose are upon them, and that they fear. In the 47. vers. there is a notable expression for to shew the curse of God upon murmuring hearts; the Lord threatning the curses that shall be upon them, (saith he) vers. 45, 46, & 47. *The curse shall pursue thee, and they shall be upon thee for a sign, and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever: Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things.* God here threatens to bring his curse so upon them, as to make them a wonder and a sign to others, why? *Because they served not the Lord with joyfulness of heart*, (that may be added to that of the wrath of God upon men) therefore God would bring such a curse upon them as should make them a wonder to all that were about them. Oh! how far art thou then that hast a murmuring heart, from serving the Lord with joyfulness?

The eleventh evil of discontent and murmuring is this, *There is much of the spirit of Satan in a murmuring spirit.* The Devil is the most discontented creature that is in the world; He is the proudest creature that is, and the discontentedst creature, and the most dejected creature. Now therefore so much discontentment as thou hast, so much of the spirit of Satan thou hast. It was the unclean spirit that went up and down and found no rest; so when a man or womans spirit hath no rest, it is a sign that it hath much of the unclean spirit, of the spirit of Satan. And thou shouldest think thus with thy self, Oh Lord, what? have I the spirit of Satan upon me? It is Satan that is the most discontented spirit that is, and Oh! how much of his spirit have I upon me, that can find no rest at all?

Twelfthly, Murmuring and discontent hath this evil in it, *There is an absolute necessity, that thou shouldest have disquiet all the dayes of thy life.* As if a man that is in a great croud should complain that other folks touch him. While we are in this World, God hath so ordered things, that afflictions must befall us, and if we will complain and be discontented upon every cross and affliction, we must complain and be discontent all the dayes of our lives, yea, God in just judgement will let things fall out on purpose to vex those that have vexing spirits, and discontented hearts, and therefore there is a necessity that they should live disquiet all their dayes: & men will not much care to disquiet those that are continually murmuring, Oh! they will have disquiet all their dayes.

Laſtly, There is this dreadfull evil in diſcontent and murmuring, *God may juſtly withdraw his care of you, and his protection over you, ſeeing God cannot pleaſe you in his adminiſtrations.* We uſe to ſay ſo to diſcontented ſervants; Nay, if you be not pleaſed, mend your ſelves when you will. If you have a ſervant not content with his diet, and wages, and work, you ſay, mend your ſelves. So may God juſtly ſay to us, we that profeſs our ſelves ſervants to him, to be in his work, and yet are diſcontented with this thing or that in Gods family, God might juſtly ſay, Mend your ſelves. What if God ſhould ſay to any of you, If my care over you do not pleaſe you, then take care of your ſelves, if my protection over you will not pleaſe you, then protect your ſelves: Now all things that do befall you, befall you through a providence of God, and if you be thoſe that belong to God, there is a protection of God over you, and a care of God. Now if God ſhould ſay, Well, you ſhall not have the benefit of my protection any longer, and I will take no further care of you: would not this be a moſt dreadfull judgement of God from Heaven upon you? Take heed what you do then in being diſcontent with Gods will towards you, and indeed upon diſcontent this may befall you. And this is the reaſon why many people, though Gods protection hath been very gracious over them for a time, and they have thriven abundantly, yet afterwards almoſt all that behold them may ſay, that they live as if God had caſt off his care over them, and as if God did not care what befell them. Now then my brethren, put all theſe together, all that we were ſpeaking of the laſt day, and theſe particulars that have been added now this morning for the ſetting out of a murmuring and diſcontented Spirit; Oh what an ugly face hath this ſin of murmuring, and diſcontentedneſs. Oh! what cauſe is there that we ſhould lay our hands upon our hearts, and go away and be humbled before the Lord becauſe of this! Whereas your thoughts were wont to be exerciſed about providing for your ſelves, and getting more comforts to your ſelves, let the ſtream of your thoughts now be turned to humble your ſelves for your diſcontentedneſs: Oh that you may have your hearts break before God, for otherwiſe you will fall to it again, Oh the wretchedneſs of mans heart! You ſhall find in Scripture concerning the people of *Iſrael*, how ſtrangely they fell to their murmuring again, and again, do but obſerve three Texts of Scripture for that, the firſt in the 15. of *Exod.* at the beginning, there you ſhall have *Moſes* and the Congregation ſinging to God, and bleſſing God for his mercie, *Then ſang* Moſes *and the children of* Iſrael *this ſong unto the Lord, and ſpake, ſaying, I will ſing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriouſly, the horſe and his rider hath he thrown into the Sea.* And then, *The Lord is my ſtrength & ſong, and he is become my ſalvation, he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation, my Fathers God, and I will exalt him;* and ſo he goes on, *And who is like unto thee, O Lord, amongſt the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holineſs, fearfull in praiſes, doing wonders?* Thus their hearts triumphed in God: but mark before the Chapter is ended in the 23. verſ. *When they came to* Marah (in the ſame Chapter) *they could not drink of the waters of* Marah, *for they were bitter, therefore the name of it was called* Marah, *and the people murmured againſt Moſes.* After ſo great a mercie as this was, what unthankfulneſs was there here in their murmuring? Then God gave them water,

water, but in the very next Chapter they fell to their murmuring, (you read not that they were humbled for their former murmuring, and therefore they murmur again) *Exod.* 16. 1, &c. *All the Congregation of the children of* Israel *come to the wilderness of* Sin, *&c. And the whole Congregation* (in the second verse) *of the children of* Israel *murmured against* Moses, *and against* Aaron *in the wilderness, and the children of* Israel *said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the Land of* Egypt, *when we sate by the flesh-pots, and when we did eat bread to the full.* Now they want flesh, (they wanted water before, but now they want meat) they fell to murmuring again, they were not humbled for this murmuring against God, neither when God gave them flesh according to their desires, but they fell to murmuring again, they wanted somewhat else. In the very next Chapter (they went not far) in the 17. of *Exod.* beginning. *And all the Congregation of the children of* Israel *journied from the wilderness of* Sin, *and pitched in* Rephadim, *and there was no water for the people to drink:* then in the second verse, *wherefore the people did chide with* Moses, *and said, Give us water that we may drink, and* Moses *said unto them, Why chide you with me? wherefore do you tempt the Lord?* And in the third verse, *And the people thirsted there for water, and the people murmured against* Moses *and said, wherefore is this, that thou hast brought us up out of* Egypt, *to kill us, and our children, and our Cattel with thirst?* So one time after another, still as soon as ever they had received the mercie, then they were a little quieted, but they were not humbled. I bring these Scriptures for this, to shew, That if we have not been humbled for murmuring, the next cross that we meet withall, we will fall to murmuring again.

There are divers aggravations of this sin of Murmuring, Ile mention but one now, and I shall but begin that. The first aggravation is this,

To murmur when we enjoy abundance of mercie, the greater and the more abundant the mercie is that we enjoy, the greater, and the viler is the sin of murmuring. As here, now when God had newly delivered them out of the house of bondage, for them, now to murmur, because they want some few particulars that they desire, Oh! to sin against God after a great mercie, this is a great aggravation, and a most abominable thing. Now my brethren, the Lord hath granted us very great mercies, I'le but speak a word of what God hath done of late, what mercies hath the Lord granted to us this summer, heaped mercies upon us, one mercie upon another. What a condition were we in at the beginning of this summer? and what a different condition are we in now! Oh what a mercie is it, that the Lord hath not taken advantages against us, that he hath not made those Scriptures (before mentioned) good upon us for all our murmuring, the Lord hath gone on with one mercie after another. We hear of mercie in *Bristol*, and mercie to our brethren in *Scotland*: But still if after this we should have any thing befall us that is but cross to us, that we should be ready to murmur again presently; Oh let us not so require God for those mercies of his; Oh let us take heed of giving God any ill requital for his mercies; Oh give God praise according to his excellent greatness, to his excellent goodness and grace.

And now, Hath God given to you the Contentment of your hearts? Take

You heed of being the cauſe of any grief to your brethren, think not that becauſe God hath been gracious unto you, that therefore he hath given you liberty for to bring them into bondage: Oh! let not there be ſuch an ill effect of Gods mercie to you, as for you to exclude by petitioning, or any other way, your brethren that the Lord hath been pleaſed to make Inſtruments of your peace, let not that be the fruit of it, nor to deſire any thing that your ſelves do not yet underſtand. God is very jealous of the glory of his mercy, and if there ſhould be an ill uſe made of the mercie of God after we enjoy it, Oh! it would go to the heart of God, nothing is more grievous to the heart of God than the abuſe of mercy: As now, if any way that is hard and rigid ſhould be taken towards our brethren, and thoſe eſpecially that God hath made ſuch ſpeciall inſtruments of good to us, that have been ſo willing to venture their lives, and all for us; now when we have our turns ſerved, let God and his People, and Servants that have been a means to ſave us, ſhift for themſelves as well as they can: Oh! this is a great aggravation of your ſin, to ſin againſt the mercies of God, But for this Aggravation, and eſpecially in this particular, we ſhall ſpeak to (God willing) the next day.

Sermon IX.

Philippians 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content.

NOw becauſe it is very hard to work upon a murmuring ſpirit, there are divers Aggravations (I told you we are to conſider of for the further ſetting out of the greatneſs of this ſin; I mentioned but onely one the laſt day) now we ſhall proceed in that.

The firſt Aggravation of the ſin of diſcontent and murmuring is this, *For men and women to be diſcontent in the mid'ſt of mercies, in enjoyment of abundance of mercies.* To be diſcontent in any afflicted condition, is ſinfull and evil, but to be diſcontent when we are in the mid'ſt of mercies, when we are not able to count the mercies of God, yet after to be diſcontent becauſe we have not all we would have, this is a greater evil. I onely mentioned this the laſt day, that I might ſhew to you what a great ſin it is at ſuch a time as this. The Lord this Summer hath multiplied mercies one upon another, the Lord hath made this Summer to be a continued miracle of mercie, never did

did a Kingdom enjoy (in so little space of time) such mercies one upon another: Now the publick mercies of God should quiet our hearts, and keep us from discontent; and the sin of discontent for private afflictions is exceedingly aggravated by the consideration of publick mercies to the Land; When the Lord hath been so mercifull to the Land, wilt thou be fretting and murmuring, because thou hast not in thy family all the comforts that thou would'st have? As it is a great aggravation of a mans evil for him to rejoyce immoderately in his own private comforts when the Church is in affliction, when the publick suffers grievous and hard troubles, if any man shall then rejoyce and give liberty to himself, at that time to satisfie his flesh to the uttermost in all outward comforts, this is a great aggravation of his sin: So on the contrarie for any man to be immoderately troubled for any private afflictions when it goes well with the publick, with the Churches, this is a great aggravation of his sin: It may be when the Church of God was lowest, and it went worst in other parts, yet thou didst abate nothing of the comfort of thy flesh, but gavest full liberty to satisfie thy flesh as formerly, know this was thy great sin: so on the other side, when we have received such mercies in publick, we should have all our private afflictions swallowed up in the publick mercies, and we should think with our selves, though we be afflicted for our particular, yet (blessed be God) it goes well with the Church, and with the publick; the consideration of that should mightily quiet our hearts in all our private discontents, and if it doth not so, know that our sin is much encreased by the mercies of God that are abroad. Now shall Gods mercies aggravate our sins? This is a sad thing, this is to turn the mercies of God to be our miserie. Didst not thou pray to God for these mercies that God hath sent of late to the publick, these great victories that God hath given, didst not thou pray for them? now thou hast them, is not there enough in them to quiet thy heart for some private trouble thou meetest withall in thy family? Is not there goodness enough there to cure thy discontentment? Certainly they were not such mercies worthy to be prayed for, except they have so much excellencie in them as to countervail some private afflictions. Publick mercies are the aggravations of private discontent, as so of publick discontent too; if we receive so many publick mercies, yet if every thing goes not in the publick according as we desire, if we be discontent at that, it will exceedingly aggravate our sin: God may say, What, shall I bestow such mercies upon a people, and yet if they have not every thing they would have they will be discontent? Oh! it is exceeding evil. So in particular, the mercies that concerns thy self, thy family, if thou wouldst consider thou hast a great many more mercies than thou hadst afflictions, I dare boldly aver it concerning any one in this Congregation, (suppose thy afflictions be what they will) there is never a one of you but that have more mercies than afflictions.

Object. You will say, *I, but you do not know what our afflictions are, our afflictions are so as you do not conceive of them, because you feel them not?*

Answ. Though I cannot know what your afflictions are, yet I know what your mercies are, and I know they are so great, as I am sure there can be no afflictions in this World so great, as the mercies you have: If it were but this

mercie, That you have this day of grace and ſalvation continued to you, it is a greater mercie than any affliction, ſet any affliction by this mercie, and ſee which would weigh heavieſt, this is certainly greater than any affliction; that you have the day of grace and ſalvation, that you are not now in Hell, this is a greater mercie, that you have the ſound of the Goſpel yet in your ears, that you have the uſe of your reaſon, this is a greater mercie than your afflictions; that you have the uſe of your limbs, your ſences, that you have the health of your bodies, health of body is a greater mercie than poverty is an affliction; there is no man that is rich, but if he be wiſe, if he hath a ſickly body, he would part with all his riches that he might have his health; therefore thy mercies are more than thy afflictions. We find in Scripture how the holy Ghoſt doth aggravate the ſin of diſcontent from the conſideration of mercies, you have a notable Scripture for it in the 16. of *Numb.* 8. verſe *&c.* It is a ſpeech of *Moſes to Korah* and his company when they murmured, *And* Moſes *ſaid unto* Korah, *Hear I pray you, ye ſons of* Levi, (there is ſomewhat that you are ſons of *Levi*,) *Seemeth it but a ſmall thing unto you, that the God of* Iſrael *hath ſeparated you from the Congregation of* Iſrael, *to bring you near to himſelf, to do the ſervice of the Tabernacle of the Lord, and to ſtand before the Congregation to miniſter unto them? Korah* and his company were murmuring, but mark how *Moſes* aggravates this; Seemeth it a ſmall thing unto you that the God of Iſrael hath ſeparated you from the Congregation of Iſrael, to bring you near to himſelf to do the ſervice of the Tabernacle of the Lord? *&c.* You ſee it is a great honour that God puts upon a man, a great mercie that he doth beſtow upon any man, to ſeparate him from others for himſelf, to come near to him, to imploy him in the ſervice of the Tabernacle, to miniſter to the Congregation in holy things, this is a great mercie, and indeed it is ſuch a mercie as one would think there ſhould be none, that God beſtows ſuch a mercie upon, that ſhould have a murmuring heart for any affliction; It is true, many Miniſters of God they meet with hard things that might diſcourage them, and trouble and grieve their ſpirits, but now this conſideration that God is pleaſed to imploy them in ſuch a ſervice near to himſelf, that though they cannot do good to themſelves, yet they may do good to others, this ſhould quiet them. And yet in the 10. verſ. *And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy Brethren, the Sons of* Levi *with thee; and ſeek ye the Prieſthood alſo?* have not you enough already? but ſtill you are diſcontented with what you have and muſt have more, ſeek ye yet more? *Seek ye the Prieſthood alſo? for which cauſe both thou and all thy company are gathered together againſt the Lord: And what is* Aaron *that ye murmur againſt him?* What, hath God given you ſuch things, & yet will you be murmuring, becauſe you cannot have more? Me thinks that this place ſhould keep Miniſters from murmuring, though they ſhould meet with never ſuch afflictions and croſſes, and unkind dealings from men, yet ſtill they ſhould go on with hearts quieted and comforted in the work that God hath ſet them about, and labour to countervail all their afflictions by being more abundant in the work of the Lord. That is the firſt Text of Scripture that ſhews how the mercies we enjoy are aggravations to the ſin of murmuring.

And then a ſecond Scripture is in the 2. of *Job*, 10. verſ. A ſpeech of *Job* to

to his wife, What, saith *Job* when his wife would have had him curse God and die; (that was a degree beyond murmuring) saith he, *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women, shall we receive good at the hand of God, and not evil?* you see *Job* did help himself against all murmuring thoughts against the waies of God with this consideration, That he had received so much good from the Lord; what though we receive evil, yet do not we receive good as well as evil? let us set one against the other, that's the way we should go. In the 17 of *Ecclesiastes* the 14 verse, you have a notable Scripture there, whereby you may see what course is to be taken when the heart rises in murmuring, *In the day of Prosperity be joyfull, but in the day of adversity consider*; what should they consider? (mark what follows) *God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him.* God also hath set the one over against the other, that's thus, When thou art in prosperity, then indeed every man can be joyfull; but what if afflictions befalls him, what then? then consider: Consider what? That God hath set one over against the other, thou hast a great deal of affliction, and thou hast had a great deal of prosperity, thou hast many troubles, and thou hast had many mercies, make one column of mercies, and one column of afflictions, and write one against the other, and see if God hath fill'd one column as full as the other; you look altogether upon your afflictions, but look upon your mercies also; for instance, It may be God hath afflicted you in one child, but he hath been mercifull to you in another child, set one against the other, God afflicted *David in absolom*, but he was mercifull to *David* in *Solomon*, and therefore when *David* cryed out, Oh *Absolom my son my son*! if *David* had thought upon *Solomon*, and cried, Oh *Solomon* my son my son, it would have quieted him. And it may be God hath been mercifull to thee in a Wife, or in thy Husband, set that against thy affliction: it may be God crosses thee in thy Estate, but it may be he doth imploy thee in his Service, it may be thou art afflicted in some of thy Friends, but thou hast other Friends that are great mercies to thee, and therefore you should set one against the other, and it doth concern you so to do, for those mercies will be agravations of your sins, and you had better make Gods mercies a means to lessen your sins, than to be the aggravation of your sins: if you make not the mercies of God to help you against your murmuring, you will make them to be agravations of the sin of murmuring. I beseech you, for this, take but this one consideration further, and if you will but work it upon your hearts I hope you may find a great deal of power in it. You find afflictions, and your hearts are troubled and murmur, consider how Gods mercies doth aggravate this sin, thus: in the midst of our sins we do make account God should accept of our services; do but consider thus, If in the midst of our many sins we hope that God will accept of our poor services, why then should not we in the midst of our afflictions bless God for his many mercies? Shall God be thus gracious to us that notwithstanding our many sins, yet he will not cast away our poor duties and services that we perform, then why should not we in the midst of our sufferings accept of what mercies we have, and not slight them and disregard them? If thou in the midst of Gods mercies, shalt not be willing to bear afflictions that God laies upon thee,

thee, then it were just with God, that in the midst of thy sins he should not regard any of thy duties; now is there not as much power in thy manifold sins to cause God to reject thy duties and services, as there is power in afflictions (in the midst of many mercies) to take off thy heart from being affected with Gods mercies? And that's the first aggravation of the sin of murmuring, to murmur in the midst of mercies.

A second Aggravation of the sin of murmuring is, *when we murmur for small things.* Saith *Naamans* servant to him, Father (for so he called him) if the Prophet had required you to do some great thing, would not you have done it? how much more this little thing. So I say, if the Lord had required you to suffer some great matter, would not you have been willing to suffer? How much more this little thing. I remember I have read in *Seneca* a Heathen, he hath this similitude which is a very fine one to set out the great evil of murmuring upon smaller afflictions, (saith he) Suppose a man hath a very fair house to dwell in, and he hath fair Orchyards and Gardens, and set about with brave tall Trees for ornament, if this man now should murmur because the wind blows off a few leaves of his Trees, what a most unreasonable thing were it for him to be weeping and wringing his hands, because he loses a few leaves off his Trees, when he hath abundance of all kind of fruit? Thus it is with many (saith he) though they have a great many comforts about them, yet some little matter, the blowing off of a few leaves from them is enough to disquiet them. It was a great evil when *Ahab* having a Kingdom, yet the want of his neighbours Vineyard had such power to disquiet him: So for us to murmur, not because we have not such a thing as we have need of, but because we have not what possibly we might have, this is a verie great sin. Suppose God gives a child that hath all the limbs and parts compleat, a child that is verie comely, and hath excellent parts, wit, and memorie, but it may be there is a wart that grows upon the finger of the child, and she murmurs at it, and Oh, what an affliction is this to her! she is so taken up with that, as she forgets to give any thanks to God for her child, and all the goodness of God to her in the child is swallowed up in that; would not you say, this were a folly and a very great evil in a woman so to do? Truly our afflictions if we weighed them aright, they are but such kind of things in comparison of our mercies. *Rebeckah* she had a mighty desire to have children, but because she found some trouble in her body when she was with child, saith she, *Why am I thus?* As if she should say, I had as good have none, onely because she found a little pain and trouble in her body. To be discontent when the affliction is small and little, that encreases verie much the sin of murmuring, it is too much for any one to murmur upon the heavi'est cros that can befal one in this world, but upon some small things to be discontent and murmur, that's worse. I have read of one, that when he lay upon a heap of Damask Roses, he complained, there was one of the Rose leaves lay double under him: So we are ready thus for very small things to to make complaints and be discontented with our condition. And that's the Second Aggravation.

A Third Aggravation is this, *For men that are of parts and abilities, to whom*

whom God hath given wisdom, for them to be discontent and murmur, that's more than if others do it. Murmuring and discontentedness is too much in the weakest, yet we can bear with it sometimes in Children and Women that are weak; but for those that are Men of understanding, that have wisdom, that God imploys in publick service, that they should be discontent with every thing, this is an exceeding great evil; for men in their familie, (to whom God hath given parts and wisdom) when things fall out amiss there, to be alwaies murmuring and repining, their sin is greater than for women and children to do it.

A Fourth Aggravation is, *The consideration of the freeness of all Gods Mercies to us.* What ever we have it is of free-cost, what though we have not all we would have, seeing what we have is free? If what we have were earned, then it were somwhat, but when we consider that all is from God, for us to murmur at his dispensations, is very evil. Suppose a man were in a family entertained by a friend, and he did not pay for his board, but he had it given him for nothing, it's expected such a one should not be ready to find fault with every thing in the house, with servants, or with meat at table, or the like; if such a one that hath plentiful provision, and all given him gratis, and paies nothing for his diet, should be discontented if a Cup should not be filled for him as he would have it, or if he should stay a minute of an hour longer for a thing than he would, this we would account a great evil: So it is with us, we are at Gods Table every day, and it is upon free cost whatever we have. It is accounted very unmannerly for a man at his friends table to find fault with things, though at home he may be bold: Now when we are at the table of God (for so all Gods administrations to us are his table) and are at free-cost, now for us to be finding fault and be discontented, this is a great Aggravation of our sin.

A Fift Aggravation of the sin of Murmuring is this, *when men and women murmur and are discontented and impatient, when they have the things that they were discontented for the want of before they had them.* So it is sometimes with children, they will cry for such a thing, and when you give it them, then throw it away, they are as much discontented as they were before. So it was with the people of *Israel*, nothing would quiet them but they must have a King, *Samuel* perswaded them to the contrary, and told them what kind of King they should have; and when they had a King, *Hos.* 10. 3. *What shall a King do to us?* they were not contented when they had one. So *Rachel*, she must have children or else she died, and when she had a little trouble, she was discontented too; so that we are neither well full nor fasting (as we use to say.)

The sixt Aggravation of the sin of murmuring is this, *For these men and women to be discontent and murmur that God had raised from mean and low estates and conditions*; This is a very great aggravation if thou be discontent now: There was a time when thou wert low enough; and perhaps when thou wert so low, then thou didst say, Oh if God would deliver me from such an affliction, or give me but a little more in my estate, I should think my self in a good condition; but if God by his providence doth raise

thee,

thee, thou art as greedy of more ſtill as thou wert before, and as much discontented as thou wert before: this is an evil thing for people that had mean breeding, and poor beginnings, for them to be ſo nice, and dainty that nothing can pleaſe them, whereas there was a time not long ſince that they were low and mean enough; But it is very ordinary for thoſe that are raiſed from a low and mean condition, to be the more nice and dainty, and more proud when they are raiſed than others that are of better breeding: It's too much for a child to be diſcontented in his fathers houſe, but if a man hath taken a poor begger-boy, if you had taken ſuch a one into your houſe that lay begging at your door, and ſet him at your own table, could you bear that ſuch a one ſhould complain that ſuch a thing is not well dreſt, or the like; you could not bear it if your children ſhould do it, but you could bear it a great deal better with them than to hear ſuch a one do it: but thou art a poor beggar, and God hath (as it were) taken thee into his great Family, and if the Lord hath been pleaſed to raiſe thee higher, that now thou haſt a competency, that thou maieſt live as a man, to be of uſe and ſervice in the place where God hath ſet thee, now wilt thou be diſcontent becauſe thou haſt not every thing that thou deſireſt? We know the Prodigal, when he came to himſelf, Oh! ſaith he, *In my fathers houſe is bread enough.* He did not ſay, there's good chear enough, and a great deal of dainties; no, he thought of nothing but bread, *there's bread enough*: So it's ordinary for men and women when they are in a low condition, they think that if they may have bread, any competency, they will be contented and bleſs God, but when they have their bread and things convenient, they muſt have more or elſe they are not contented; know that this is an exceeding great aggravation to thy diſcontentment, when you are raiſed from a very low condition, and yet you cannot be contented with what you have.

A Seventh Aggravation of this ſin is this, *For them to be diſcontent that have been very great ſinners and ungodly in their former time.* For men and women that have much guiltineſs upon them, the guilt of very many ſins upon them, that have provok'd God exceedingly againſt them, & have brought themſelves in a moſt dreadfull manner under the ſentence of Gods Juſtice, and yet God being pleaſed to reprieve them, for them to murmur and to be diſcontent with Gods adminiſtrations towards them, this is exceeding evil. Oh! it were conſideration enough to quiet any murmuring in our hearts, to think thus, We are but ſinners, why ſhould not we be ſufferers that are ſinners? But then conſider, we that are ſuch great ſinners, guilty of ſuch notorious ſins, that it is a wonder that we are out of Hell at this preſent, yet for us to be diſcontent and murmur, how exceedingly doth this encreaſe our ſin, Conſider how we have croſſed God in our ſins, then if God ſhould croſs us in the way of our ſufferings, ſhould not we ſit down quiet without murmuring? Certainly thou never knewеſt what it was to be humbled for thy manifold ſins, that art diſcontented at any adminiſtration of God towards thee.

The Eighth Aggravation of the ſin of murmuring is, *For thoſe men that are of little uſe in the world, for them to be diſcontented.* If you have but a beaſt that you make much uſe of, you will feed it well, but if you have but little

uſe

use of him, then you turn him into the Commons, little provision serves his turn, because you make not use of him: If we lived so as to be exceeding usefull to God and his Church, we might expect that God would be pleased to come in some encouraging way to us, but when our consciences tell us, we live and do but little service for God, what if God should turn us upon the Commons, yet we are fed according to our work, according to our imployment; Why should any creature be serviceable to thee, who art so little serviceable to God? This one meditation would much help us, to think, I am discontent because such and such creatures are not serviceable to me, but why should I expect that they should be serviceable to me, when I am not serviceable to God? And that is the eighth aggravation.

A ninth aggravation of the sin of murmuring is this, *For us to be discontent at that time when God is about to humble us.* It should be the care of a Christian, to observe what are Gods ways towards him, what is God about to do with me at this time: Is God about to raise me, to comfort me? let me close with Gods goodness, and bless his name, let me joyn with the work of God, when he offers mercie to me, to take the mercie he offers. But again, is God about to humble me? is God about to break my heart, and to bring my heart down to him? let me joyn with God in this work of his, this is for a Christian to walk with God. It is said that *Enoch*, and *Noah* walked with God; walked with God, what is that? That is, To observe what is the work of God that God is now about, and to joyn with God in that work of his; so that according as God turns this way or that way, the heart should turn with God, and have suitable workings unto the workings of God towards him. Now then, I am discontented and murmur because I am afflicted; Therefore thou art afflicted, because God would humble thee, and the great design that God hath in afflicting of thee, is, To break and humble thy heart; And wilt thou now maintain a spirit quite opposite to the work of God? for thee to murmur and be discontented, is to resist the work of God; God is doing thee good, if thou couldest see it, now if he be pleased to sanctifie thy affliction, to break that hard heart of thine, and humble that proud spirit of thine, it would be the greatest mercie that ever thou hadst in all thy life; Now wilt thou yet stand out against God? it is even as if thou shouldst say, Well, the Lord is about to break me, and humble me, but he shall not; this is the language of thy murmuring and thy discontentedness, though thou darest not say so, but though thou sayest not so in words, yet it is certainly the language of the temper of thy spirit: Oh! consider what an aggravation this is: I am discontented when God is about to work such a work upon me as is exceedingly for my good, but yet I stand out against him and resist him. That is the ninth aggravation.

The tenth aggravation of the sin of murmuring and discontent is this, *The more palpable and remarkable the hand of God appears to bring about an affliction, the greater is the sin of murmuring and discontent under an affliction.* It is a great evil at any time to murmur and be discontent, but though it be a sin, when I see but an ordinarie providence working for me, not to submit to that, but when I see an extraordinarie providence working, that is a greater sin; that is,

When

When I see the Lord in some remarkable way working about such an affliction beyond what any could have thought of, shall I resist such a remarkable hand of God? shall I stand out against God when I see God doth express his will in such a remarkable manner, that he would have me to be in such a condition? Indeed before we see the will of God apparent, we may desire to avoid an affliction, & may use means for it, but now, when we see God expressing his will from Heaven in a manner beyond ordinary, and more remarkably, then certainly it is fit for us to fall down and submit to him, and not to oppose; when God comes with a mighty stream against us, it's our best way to fall down before him and not to resist; for as it is an argument of a mans disobedience, when there is not onely a Command against a sin, but when God reveals his Command in a terrible way, the more solemn the Command of God is, the greater is the sin in breaking that Command: so the more remarkable the hand of God is in bringing an affliction upon us, the greater is the sin for us to murmur and be discontented. Then God expects that we should fall down when he (as it were) speaks from Heaven to thee by name, & saith, Well, I will have this spirit of thine down, do not you see that my hand is stretched out, my eyes are upon you, my thoughts are upon you, and I must have that proud spirit of thine down? Oh! then it's fit for the creature to yield and submit unto him. When you speak in an ordinary manner to your servants, or children, you expect they should regard what you say, but when you make them stand still by you, and you speak to them in a more solemn way, then if they should dis-regard what you say, you are very impatient: So certainly God cannot take it well when ever he doth appear from Heaven in such a remarkable way to bring an affliction, if then we do not submit to him.

The Eleventh Aggravation of the sin of murmuring is this, *To be discontented though God hath been exercising of us long under affliction, yet still to remain discontented.* For a man or woman at first, when an affliction befalls them, to have a murmuring heart, then it's an evil; but to have a murmuring heart when God hath been a long time exercising them with affliction, it's more evil. Though an Heifer at first when the yoke is put upon her, she wrigles up and down & will not be quiet, but if after many moneths or years it shall not draw quietly, the Husbandman would rather feed it fat, and prepare it for the Butcher, than be troubled any longer with it: So though the Lord was content to pass by that discontented spirit of thine at first, yet God having a long time kept the yoke upon thee, thou hast been under his afflicting hand (it may be) divers years; & yet thou remain discontent still; it were just with God that he should bear thy murmuring no longer, and that thy discontent under the affliction should be but a preparation to thy destruction. So you see when a man or a woman hath been long exercised with afflictions and yet are discontent, that's an aggravation of the sin: Mark that text in *Heb.* 12. 11. *Now* (saith the Scripture) *No chastening for the present is joyous but grievous; nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.* It's true, our afflictions are not joyous but grievous; though at first when our affliction comes, it is very grievous, but yet (saith the text) *afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those that are exercised thereby;*

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When thou haſt been a long time in the School of afflictions, thou art a very dullard in Chriſts School, if thou haſt not learned this Contentment, *I have learned* (ſaith Saint *Paul*) *in every ſtate therewith to be content*: *Paul* had learned this leſſon quickly, thou haſt been a learning many years, perhaps thou maieſt ſay as *Heman* did, *That thou art afflicted from thy youth up*, in. 88 *Pſal.* Oh! it's a very evil thing, if being exerciſed long with afflictions you are not yet contented. The eye is as tender a part as any is in a mans body, but yet the eye is able to continue in, and bear a great deal of cold, becauſe it is more uſed to it; ſo thoſe that are uſed to afflictions, thoſe that God exerciſes much with afflictions, (though they have tender ſpirits otherwiſe) yet they ſhould have learned Contentedneſs by this time. A new Cart may creek and make a noiſe, but after the uſe of it a while it will not do ſo: So when thou wert firſt a Chriſtian, and newly come into the work of Chriſt; perhaps thou makeſt a noiſe, and canſt not bear affliction; but art thou an old Chriſtian, and yet wilt thou be a murmuring Chriſtian? Oh! that's a ſhame for any that are ancient Profeſſors, that have been a long time in the School of Jeſus Chriſt to have murmuring and diſcontented ſpirits, And thus you have had Eleven Aggravations of this ſin of murmuring and diſcontent.

But now, my brethren, becauſe this diſcontented humour, is a very tough humour, and it is very hard to work upon, there's none that are diſcontented but will have ſomething to ſay for their diſcontent, I ſhall therefore deſire to take away what every diſcontented heart hath to ſay for himſelf.

The PLEAS of a Diſcontented Heart.

In the firſt place, Saith one that is diſcontented, *It is not diſcontentment, it is the ſenſe of my condition, I hope you would have me ſenſible of my condition: perhaps when God takes away a friend or ſome other comfort they are in ordinately ſorrowfull, and wringing their hands, as if they were undone, and let any one but ſpeak to them*, (ſay they) *would you not have me ſenſible of my afflictions? And thus many would hide their ſinfull murmuring under Gods hand with this pretence, that it is but ſenſibleneſs of their affliction.*

To that I anſwer, Firſt, There is no ſenſe of any affliction that will hinder the ſenſe of Gods mercies, nay, the more we are ſenſible of our affliction, if it be in a gracious manner, the more ſenſible we will be of Gods mercie; but thou art ſo ſenſible of thy affliction, as it takes away the ſenſe of all thy mercies; Oh! this is ſinfull diſcontent, this is not to be ſenſible of thy condition as God would have thee, but it is to be ſenſible in a wicked way, you go beyond your bounds: By this rule you may come to know when your ſorrows and troubles for your afflictions goes beyond the bounds; we may be ſorrowfull when God afflicts, but Oh! that I might know when my ſorrow goes beyond the bounds of it; truly thou maieſt know it by this, Doth the ſenſe of thy afflictions take away the ſenſe of thy mercies? If it doth, then it goes beyond the bounds,

Secondly, If it were but a bare ſenſe of an affliction, it would not hinder thee in the duties of thy condition, the right ſenſe of our afflictions will never hinder us in the performance of the duties of our condition, but thou art

ſo

ſo ſenſible of thy affliction as thou art made unfit for the performance of the duties of the condition that God hath put thee in, ſurely it is more than meer ſence of thy affliction.

Thirdly, If it were but meer ſence of thy affliction, yet then thou couldſt in this thy condition bleſs God for the mercies that others have, but thy diſcontentedneſs uſually breeds envy at it; when any one is diſcontented with their condition, they have an envious ſpirit at the conditions of thoſe that are delivered from what afflictions they bear, certainly then it is turn'd to be ſour and naught, when thou art ſo ſenſible of thy afflictions, and unſenſible of mercies, as thou art unfit for the duties of thy condition, and envious at others that are not afflicted as thou art.

The ſecond PLEA.

But will a diſcontented heart ſay, *I am not ſo much troubled with my afflictions, but it is for my ſin rather than my affliction, and I hope you will give leave that we ſhould be troubled and diſcontented with our ſin; and were it not for ſin that I ſee in my ſelf, I ſhould not be ſo diſcontented as I am, Oh! it is ſin that is heavie upon me, and it is that that troubles me more than my afflictions?*

Deceive not thine own heart, there is a very great deceit in this, there is many people that when Gods hand is out againſt them, they will ſay, they are troubled for their ſin, but the truth is, it is the affliction that doth trouble them rather than their ſin, their heart doth exceedingly deceive them in this very thing: For,

Firſt, They were never troubled for their ſin before this affliction came; but you will ſay, *It is true, I was not before, for my proſperitie blinded me, but now God hath opened mine eyes by afflictions:* Hath he ſo?

Secondly, Then thy great care will be rather for the removing of thy ſin, than thy affliction; Art thou more ſolicitous about the taking away thy ſin, than the taking away of thine affliction?

Thirdly, If it be thy ſin that troubles thee, If God ſhould take away thy afflictions, yet except thy ſin be taken away, and thy heart be better, this would not content thee, thou couldſt not be ſatisfied: but we ſee it ordinarily, that if God removes their afflictions, there is no more trouble for their ſin. Oh! many do bely themſelves in this, in ſaying, that they are ſo troubled for their ſin, and eſpecially thoſe that are ſo troubled, that they are in danger to miſcarrie, and to make away themſelves, there is not one in ten thouſand that are in ſuch a condition as this is, but it is afflictions rather than ſin that puts them to it; indeed you lay all upon this, as if it were the work of the Word, or the Spirit of bondage; I remember I heard not long ſince of a Divine that being judicious, and uſed to ſuch kind of things, there came a man to him mightily troubled for his ſin, and he could not tell what to do, he was ready to deſpair, the Divine looks upon him, ſaith he, Are you not in debt? he confeſt that he was; and at length the Miniſter began to find it out, that that was his trouble rather than his ſin, and ſo was a means to help him that way, that his Creditours ſhould not come upon him, and then the man was pretty quiet, and would

would not make away himself any longer: For it is a usual thing, that if any thing befals a man that doth cross him, Oh then it is their sin that doth trouble them. Sometimes it is thus with servants, if their governours cross them, then they are vext and fret, and come to deal with them, Oh then they will say they are sorrowfull for their sin: but we must take heed of dallying with God, that is the Seer and Searcher of the secrets of all hearts: many of you go sullen and dumpish up and down your families, and then you say it is your [illegible] that lies upon you, when God knows it is otherwise, it is because you cannot have your wills as you would have.

Fourthly, If thou beest troubled for thy sin, then it will be thy great care not to sin in thy trouble, not by thy trouble to encrease thy sin, but thou art troubled in such a way as the truth is thou doest increase thy sin in thy trouble, and since thou sayest thou wert troubled for thy sin, thou hast committed more sin than thou didst before.

And then lastly, If it be thy sin that troubles thee, then thou hast the more need to submit to Gods hand; *and accept of the punishment of thine iniquity*, as it is in *Levit.*26.41. There is no such consideration to take away murmuring, as to look upon my sin as the cause of my affliction.

The third PLEA.

O saith another, I find my affliction is such, that God withdraws himself from me in mine affliction, that is that that troubles me, and can any body be quiet then, can any body be satisfied with such a condition, when the Lord shall withdraw himself? were my affliction never so great, yet if I find not God withdrawing himself from me, I hope I could be content with any affliction, but I cannot find the presence of God with me in this affliction, as sometimes I have found; and it is that that troubles me, and makes me to be in such a condition as I am.

Now to that I answer thus, First, it is a very evil thing for men and women upon their affliction to conclude that God is departed from them, it may be when it comes to be examined there is no other reason, why? thou thinkest that God is withdrawn and departed, but because he doth afflict thee, now for thee to make such a conclusion, that every time God lays an affliction upon thee he is departed, this is a sinfull distemper of thy heart, and is very dishonourable to God, and grievous to his Spirit. In the 17. of *Exod.* 7. verse, you may see how God was displeased there with such a kind of distemper as this is, *And he called the name of the place* Massah *and* Meribah, *because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord amongst us, or not?* Mark, they did murmur because they were brought into afflictions, but see what the Text saith, therefore the place was called *Massah* & *Meribah*, because they tempted the Lord, saying, *Is the Lord amongst us, or not?* This was to tempt God. Sometimes we are afraid God is departed from us, & it is meerly because we are afflicted. I beseech you observe that Scripture, God calls it a tempting of him, when he afflicts any, for them to conclude and say, that God is departed from them: If a Child should crie out of his Father, and say, that his Father is turned to be an enemy to him, because he doth correct him,

this would be taken ill. I beſeech you conſider of this one place, it may be of very great uſe to you, that you may not be ready to think that God is departed, becauſe you are afflicted.

Secondly, If God be departed, the greateſt ſign of Gods departing is, becauſe you are ſo diſquiet, you make your diſquiet be the fruit of Gods departing, and if it comes to be examined, your diſquiet is the cauſe of Gods departing from you, if you could but cure your diſquiet, if you could but quiet your own hearts, and get them into a better frame of contentedneſs under Gods hand in afflicting of you, then you would find Gods preſence with you: Will you be thus diſquiet till God comes again to you? Your diſquiet drives him from you, and you can never expect Gods coming to manifeſt himſelf comfortably to your ſouls, till you have gotten your hearts quiet under your afflictions; and therefore here you ſee how croſſly you reaſon; you reaſon, I am diſquiet, becauſe God is gone, when the truth is, God is gone becauſe thou art diſquiet; reaſon but the other way, Oh! my diſquiet hath driven God from me, and therefore as ever I would have the preſence of God to come again to me, let my heart be quiet under the hand of God.

Thirdly, Doſt thou find God departing from thee in thine affliction? Wilt thou therefore depart from God too? Is this thy help? Canſt thou help thy ſelf that way? Becauſe God is gone, wilt thou go too? Do I indeed feel God departing from me? It may be it is ſo, it may be God for thy trial is departed a little from thee, and is it ſo indeed? What unwiſe courſe do I take? I commit further ſin, and ſo I go further off from God, what a caſe am I in? God goes from me, and I from God: If the child ſees the mother going from it, it is not for the child to ſay, my mother is gone yonder, and I will go the other way, no, but the child goes crying after the mother; and ſo ſhould the ſoul ſay, I ſee the Lord is withdrawing his preſence from me, and now it is beſt for me to make after the Lord with all my might; but I am ſure this murmuring humour is not a making after God, but by this I go further and further off from God, and what a diſtance is there like to be between God and me within a little while? Theſe are ſome of the *Reaſonings* and *Pleas* of a murmuring and diſcontented heart. There are many others that we ſhall meet withall, and endeavour to ſpeak to your hearts in them, that ſo this tough humour of diſcontent may (as it were) be cut with the Word, and ſoftened with the Word, that ſo it may paſs away: for that is the way of Phyſicians, when they meet with a body that hath any tough humour, then they give that that hath a piercing quality; when there is a tough humour that ſtops the water that it cannot paſs, they give that that hath a piercing quality that may make paſſage for it; and ſo thou haſt need of ſuch things that are piercing to make way through this tough humour that is in the ſpirits of men and women, whereby they come to live very uncomfortably to themſelves and others, and very diſhonourable unto God.

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Sermon X.

Philippians. 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

NOw there are many *Pleas* and *Reasonings* yet remain, for there is a great deal of do with a discontented murmuring heart. And I remember I find that the same *Hebrew* word that signifies [*to lodge, to abide*] it signifies to *murmur*, they use one word for both, for murmuring is a distemper that doth lodge in men, where it gets in once, it lodgeth, abideth, and continueth, and therefore that we may unlodge it, and get it out, we will labour to shew what are the further Reasonings of a discontented heart.

The fourth Plea.

Me thinks I could be content with Gods hand; (saith one) *so far as I see the hand of God in a thing, I can be content: but when men deal so unreasonably and unjustly with me, I know not how to bear it; I can bear it that I should be in Gods hands, but not in the hands of men; my friends or acquaintance when they deal so unrighteously with me, Oh! this goes very hard unto me, that I know not how to bear it from men.*

For the taking away of this reasoning, First, Though they be men that bring this cross upon you, yet they are Gods instruments, God hath a hand in it, and they can go no further than God would have them go. This was that that quieted *David* when *Shimei* curst him, saith he, God hath a hand in it, though *Shimei* be a wicked vile man, yet I look beyond him to God. So, Is there any of your friends that deal injuriously with you, and cross with you? look up to God, and see that man but as an instrument in Gods hands.

Secondly, If this be your trouble that men do so wrong you, you are rather to turn your hearts to pitie them, than to murmur or be discontented; for the truth is, if you be wronged by other men, you have the better of it, *For it is better to bear wrong, than to do wrong a great deal*; If they wrong you, if your heart can submit, you are in a better condition than they, because it is better to suffer, than do wrong. I remember it is said of *Socrates*, that being very patient when wrong was done

to him, they asked him how he came to be so? Saith he, If I meet with a man in the street that is a diseased man, shall I be vexed and fretted with him because he is diseased? Those that wrong me I look upon them as diseased men, and therefore pitie them.

Thirdly, Though you meet with hard dealings from men, yet you meet with nothing but kind, good, and righteous dealings from God: When you meet with unrighteous dealings from them, set one against the other. And that is for the answer to the fourth *Plea*.

The fifth PLEA.

Oh! but that affliction that comes upon me is an affliction that I never looke for, I never thought to have met with such an affliction, and that is that I know not how to bear, that is that which makes my heart so disquiet, because it was altogether unlookt for, and unexpected.

For answer to this, First, It is thy weakness and folly that thou didst not look for it and expect it: In *Acts* 20. 22, 23. see what Saint *Paul* saith concerning himself, *And now behold, I go bound in the Spirit to* Jerusalem, *not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save, that the holy Ghost witnesseth in every City, saying, That bonds and afflictions abide me.* It is true saith he, I know not the particular affliction that may befall me, but this I know, that the Spirit of God witnesseth, *That bonds and afflictions shall abide me every where*, I look for nothing else but bonds and afflictions wheresoever I go; so a Christian should do, he should look for afflictions wheresoever he is, in all conditions he should look to meet with afflictions, and therefore if any affliction should befall him, though indeed he could not fore-see the particular evil, yet he should think, this is no more than I lookt for in the general. Therefore no affliction should come unexpectedly to a Christian.

A second answer I shall give is this, Is it unexpected? then the less provision thou madest for it before it came, the more carefull shouldst thou be to sanctifie Gods name in it now it is come: It is in this case of afflictions as in mercies, many times mercies come unexpected (and that might be a third answer) to you, set one against the other, I have many mercies that I never lookt, for as well as afflictions that I never lookt for, why should not one rejoyce me as well as the other disturbs me? As it is in mercies, when they come unexpected, the less preparation there was in me for receiving mercie, the more need I have to be carefull, now to give God the glorie of the mercie, and to sanctifie Gods name in the enjoyment of the mercie; Oh so it should be with us now, we have had mercies this Summer, that we never expected, and therefore we were not prepared for them, now we should be so much the more carefull to give God the glorie of them: so when afflictions come that we did not expect, then it seems we laid not in for them beforehand, we had need be the more carefull to sanctifie Gods name in them, we should have spent some pains before to prepare for afflictions, and we did not then take so much the more pains to sanctifie God in this affliction now. And that is a fifth reasoning.

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The sixth PLEA.

Oh! but it is very great, mine affliction it is exceeding great, saith one, and how ever you say, we must be contented, it is true, you may say so that feel not such great afflictions, but if you felt my affliction that I feel, you would think it hard to bear, and be content.

To that I answer, Let it be as great an affliction as it will, it is not so great as thy sin, *He hath punished thee less than thy sins.*

Secondly, It might have been a great deal more, thou mightest have been in Hell: And it is (as I remember) *Bernards* speech, saith he, *It is an easier matter to be oppress, than perish.* Thou mightest have been in Hell, and therefore the greatness of the thing should not make thee murmur, grant it be great.

Thirdly, It may be it is the greater, because thy heart doth so murmur: for shackles upon a mans legs, if his legs be sore, it will pain him the more; if the shoulder be sore, the burden is the greater: It is because thy heart is so unsound, that thy affliction is great unto thee. And that is the sixt Reasoning.

The seventh PLEA.

But howsoever you may lessen my affliction, yet I am sure it is far greater than the afflictions of others.

First, It may be it is thy discontent that makes it greater, when (indeed) it is not so in its self.

Secondly, If it were greater than others; Is thy eye evil because the eye of God is good? why shouldst thou be discontented the more, because God is gracious to others?

Thirdly, Is thy affliction greater than others? Then in this thou hast an opportunity to honour God more than others: So thou shouldst consider, Doth God afflict me more than other men? God gives me an opportunity in this to honour him in this affliction more than other men, to exercise more grace than other men; let me labour to do it then.

Fourthly, If all afflictions were laid upon a heap together: It is a notable expression of *Solon*, that wise Heathen (saith he,) Suppose all the afflictions that are in the World were laid upon an heap, and every man should come and take a proportion of those afflictions, every one equally, there is scarce any man but would rather say, Let me have the afflictions that I had before, or else he were like to come to a greater share, a greater affliction, if so be he should equally share with the whole World: Now for you that are poor, (that are not in extremity of poverty) if all the riches in the World were laid together, and you should have an equal share, you would be poorer; but take all afflictions and sorrows whatsoever, if all the sorrows in the World were laid together in a heap, and you had but an equal share of them, your portion would be rather more than it is now for the present: and therefore do not complain, that it is more than others, so as to murmur because of that.

The eighth PLEA.

Another Reasoning that murmuring hearts have, is this, *They think, that if the affliction were any other than it is, then they would be more contented.*

First, You must know, that we are not to chuse our own rod that God shall beat us with.

Secondly, It may be if it were any other than it is, it were not so fit for thee as this is, it may be therefore God chuses it, because it is the most cross to thee, as seeing it most suitable for the purging out of that humour that is in thee. If a patient comes to take physick, and finds himself sick by it, shall he say, Oh! if it were any other potion I could bear it? it may be if it were any other than it is, it would not fit thy disease; yea, if it did not work as it doth, it would not fit thy disease: so when thou sayest of an affliction, if it were any other than it is, thou couldest bear it; do but answer thy self with this, it may be if it were any other than it is, it would not be fit for me, it would not be right to that sinfull humour that there is in my soul, and therefore God sees this to be the fittest and the most suitable for me.

Thirdly, Know, that this is the Excellencie of Grace in a Christian, *To be fitted for any condition*; not onely to say, If it were this, or that, but if it be any. As now, a Marriner, if he hath skill, he would not say, if it were any other wind but this, if the wind did blow in any point but this, I could tell how to mannage my Ship, I could shew skill in other points, but not in this; would not Marriners laugh at such a one? it would be a shame for him to say that he hath skill in any other point but this: So it should be a shame for a Christian to say that he hath skill in any other affliction but this: a Christian should be able to mannage his Ship if the wind blow any way; to guid his soul any way.

The fourth and last answer is this, Know, that the Lord hath rewards and crowns for all graces, and for the honouring them in all conditions. It may be in such a way as thou thinkest thou couldest honour God, God hath a Crown for that, and God hath another Crown to set upon the heads of those that honour him in such a way as this is; yea, he hath several sorts of Crowns (as I may so say) in Heaven, and those Crowns he must put upon some bodies head, and therefore he exercises thee in variety of conditions, that so thou mightest have the several rewards and Crowns, that God hath to reward and Crown those that are faithfull in several conditions.

The ninth PLEA.

Oh! but the condition that God hath put me in makes me to be unserviceable, and this troubles me; it is true, if it were onely an affliction and trouble to my self, it were not so much, but I am put into such a condition by this affliction, as I am unserviceable, and am like to do God no further service, God puts me into a mean estate, and what good can I do? and how burdensom is my life to me because I can do no service for God, and this is grievous to me.

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Indeed, if it be true that this is thy great grief, it is a good sign, If thou canst say as in the presence of God, above all afflictions here in this World to be laid aside and not to be imployed in the service of God, I account that the greatest affliction: I had rather bear any trouble in the World so I might do more service, than to be freed from trouble, and to be laid aside and do little service: canst thou say so? It is a good sign of grace for a man to account afflictions to be great, because he can do the Lord but little service. Few men account that any affliction at all.

But yet there may be a temptation in this. To murmur at Gods disposе when your calling is low and mean, and you can do little service, this is many times a temptation to those that are poor, those that are servants, and those that are of weak parts, and are fain to work hard to provide bread for their families, it is many times a grievous burden to them to think, such men the Lord uses in publick service, and I live in an obscure way, and to what purpose is my life?

First, To help against this temptation that thou mayest not murmur against this condition, Do but consider, though thy condition be low and mean, yet thou art in the body, thou art a member of the body though thou beest but a a mean member, the Toe, and the Finger hath its use in the body, though it be not the Eye, though it be not the Head, or the Heart, yet it hath its use in the body. And it is an excellent expression that I remember *Austin* hath about this, (saith he) it is better to be the meanest member in the body, than to be the highest member, and more excellent, and cut off from the body, it is better to be a little sprig in the tree joyned to the root, than to be an arm cut off from the root. Now other men that have but common gifts in the World, that are not members of Jesus Christ, (indeed) they seem to have more excellencie than those that are godly, that are in a mean condition, mean parts, mean callings, but they are not of the body, they are not joyn'd to the root, and therefore their condition is worse. As a great arm of a tree when it is cut off it hath a great many leaves upon it, and it seems a great deal more glorious than those little sprigs that are upon the tree, but that little sprig is in a better condition, why? Because joyned to the tree and hath sap from the root and flourisheth, but the other will wither and die within a while: So it is with the men of the World, they be but like great boughs cut off from the tree, though they have excellent parts, and have great estates, and pomp and glorie in the World, they have no Union with Jesus Christ the root: But now others that live in a poor condition, a poor tradesman, a poor servant, a poor labouring man that labours for his family every day, yet he being godly, (saith he) though I have but little for the present, little glorie, little credit, little comfort, yet I am joyned to the body, and there I have supply, and that that will feed me with comfort, blessing, and mercie to all eternitie: So all that are in a poor condition in this World: if they be godly, do but think of that; though thou beest mean yet thou art in the body, and joyned to the root, thou art joyned to the principal of comfort, good, blessing, and mercie that will hold out to eternity, when thousand thousands of glorious pompous men in the World, shall wither and perish everlastingly; and therefore be not troubled at thy mean condition.

Secondly, Though thou haſt but a mean calling in this World, and ſo art not regarded as a man of uſe in the World, yet if thou beeſt a Chriſtian, God hath called thee to a higher calling; thy general calling it is a high calling, though thy particular calling be but low and mean: And for that, you have a place in the Chapter before my Text, *Phil.* 3. 14. *I preſs towards the mark* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *for the price of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus*: So that every Chriſtian hath a high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus, God hath called him to the higheſt thing that he hath called any creature to that he hath made, the Angels in Heaven have not a higher calling than thou haſt. Thou that perhaps ſpendeſt thy time in a poor buſineſs, in the meaneſt calling, if thou beeſt a dungraker, to rake channels, or cleanſe places of filth or any other thing in the World that is the meaneſt that can be conceived of, thy general calling as a Chriſtian doth advance thee higher, than any particular calling can advance any man in the World; others indeed that are called to mannage the affairs of the State, they are in a high calling, or Miniſters they are in a high calling, but thine in ſome reſpect is higher. A poor ſervant that muſt be ſcraping all day about poor mean things, many times may have ſuch a temptation as this is, Oh what a poor condition hath God diſpoſed me to! will God have regard to ſuch a one that is in ſuch a poor low place as I am? Oh yes, Chriſt hath regard to the meaneſt member; as a man hath as true regard to the Toe if it be in pain, and will tender that as truly and verily, as any other member; ſo Chriſt hath regard to his loweſt and meaneſt ones.

Thirdly, Thou art in a high calling, though thy outward calling be low in reſpect of men, yet in reſpect of God thou art in the ſame calling with the Angels in Heaven, and in ſome degree called to that that is higher, for the Scripture ſaith, that the Angels come to underſtand the Myſterie of the Goſpel by the Church; thou that art a Chriſtian in that general calling of thine, thou art joyned with principalities and powers, and with Angels in the greateſt work that God hath called any creature to, and therefore let that comfort thee in this.

Fourthly, Thy calling is low and mean, yet be not diſcontented with that, for thou haſt a principle within thee (if thou beeſt a godly man or woman) of grace that doth raiſe thy loweſt actions to be higher in Gods eſteem, than all the brave glorious actions that are done in the World; the principle of Faith doth it, for any man or woman to go on in obedience to God in a way of Faith in the calling that God hath ſet them, (I ſay doing this through a principle of Faith) it doth raiſe this action, and makes it a more glorious action than all the glorious victories of *Alexander* and *Cæſar*, than all their Triumphs and glorious pomp that they had in all their conqueſts, it was not ſo glorious as for thee to do the loweſt action out of Faith. For, as *Luther* ſpeaks of a poor Milk-maid, and yet being a believer, and doth it in Faith, he compares the action to all the glorious actions of *Cæſar*, and makes that a great deal more eminent and glorious in the eyes of God, therefore Faith raiſes thy works that are but mean, raiſes them to be very glorious.

Yea, and the truth is, There is more obedience to ſubmit to God in a low calling, than to ſubmit to him in a higher calling; for it is clear obedience, meer

meer obedience that makes thee go on in a low calling; but there may be much self-love that makes men go on in a higher calling, for there is Riches, Credit, and account in the World, and rewards comes in by that, which doth not in the other: To go on quietly in a low calling is more obedience to God.

Fifthly, Know further in the last place, There is like to be more reward: For the Lord when he comes to reward, he doth not come to examine what the work hath been that men and women have been exercised in, but what their faithfulness hath been, *well done good and faithfull servant*, saith the Lord, he doth not say, well done good servant for thou hast been faithfull to me in publick works, ruling Cities and States, and affairs in Kingdoms, and therefore thou shalt be rewarded, no, but, *well done good and faithfull servant*; now thou mayest be *faithfull* in little as well as others are in more, by going on and working thy dayes labour, when thou getteſt but a couple of shillings to maintain thy family, thou mayest be as faithfull in this as those are that rules a Kingdom; now God looks to a mans faithfulness, and thou mayest have as great a reward for thy faithfulness, that art a poor servant in the Kitchin all the day, as another that sits upon the Throne all day, and as great a Crown of glorie thou mayest have at the day of judgement, as a King that sits upon the Throne, that hath ruled for God upon his Throne; yea, thy faithfulness may be rewarded by God with as great glorie, as a King that hath swaied his Scepter for God; because (I say) the Lord doth not so much look at the work that is done, as at the faithfulness of our hearts in doing it; then why should not every one of us go on comfortably and cheerfully in our low condition, for why may not I be faithfull as well as another? It is true, I cannot come to be as rich a man, and as honourable as others, but I may be as faithfull as any other man: that every one of you may conclude with your selves, what doth let, but that you that are the pooreſt and meaneſt may be as faithfull as the greateſt, yea, you may have as glorious a Crown in Heaven, and therefore go on comfortably and cheerfully in your way.

The tenth PLEA.

There is another reasoning that some may have, and that is this. *Oh! I could bear much affliction in some other way, but this is very grievous to me; the unsetledness of my condition; though my condition were but low, yet if it were in a setled way, I could be content, but it is so unconstant, and so unsetled, that I can never know what to trust to, but am tost up and down in the World in an unsetled condition, and this is hard to be content with.*

Now to that I answer, First, that the Psalmist saith, *That every man in his setled estate is vanity*, in *Psalm* 36.5. your books have it, Every man at his *beſt estate* is vanity, the word is his *setled estate*; you think if you were but setled, Oh then you could be content, but the truth is, man in his setled estate is vanity.

Secondly, I answer thus, That perhaps God sees it is better for thee to live in a continual dependance upon him, and not to know what thy condition shall be on the morrow, than for thee to have a more setled condition in respect

respect of the comforts of the creature; do but remember that we spake of before, that Christ doth not teach you to pray, Lord give me enough that will serve me for two or three years, but, *this day our dayly bread*; to teach us we must live upon God in a dependant condition every day for daily bread. Here was the difference that is observable between the Land of *Canaan* and *Egypt*, the Land of *Canaan* that depended upon God for the watering of it with showers from Heaven, but *Egypt* had a constant way of watering the Country, that did not so much depend upon Heaven for water, but upon the river *Nylus*, which did at some certain time over-flow the Country: and they knowing that the watering of their country did depend upon that River, and not upon Heaven, they grew more proud: and therefore the Scripture to expresse *Pharaoh's* pride, brings him in, saying, *The River is mine*, he could order the River as he pleased, for it was his: *Canaan*, which was a Country which was to depend upon God, though they had rain at one time, yet they knew not whether they should have it at another time, and liv'd alwaies in a dependance upon God, not knowing what should become of them: Now God thought this to be a better Land for his people than *Egypt*, and this is given as one reason among others for it, because the Lord lookt upon this, as more suitable to the state of his people that were to live by faith, to be continually depending upon Heaven, upon Himself, and not to have a constant setled way in the creature for their outward dependance. And we find it by experience, that when those that are godly, live in the greatest dependance upon God, and have setled comings in from the creature, they do exercise Faith more, and are in a better condition for their souls than before. Oh! many times it falls out, that the worse thy outward estate is, the better thy soul is, and the better thy outward estate is, the worse thy soul is. We read in *Ezra*, 4. 13. the objection that the enemies had against the people of *Israels* building of the wall of the Citie: their writing to *Artaxerxes* against them, saith, *Be it known unto the King, that if the City be builded, & the walls set up again, then they will not pay toll, tribute, and custom; and so thou shalt endamage the revenue of the King.* If the wall be built (say they): then they will refuse to pay toll, tribute, and custom to the King: that is thus, so long as they live in such a condition, where they have dependance wholly upon the King, and lie at the Kings mercie, that is, they are in no Citie that hath walls built, but the King may come upon them when he will, so long they will pay custom to the King, but if once they come to build a wall, and can defend themselves, and have not their dependance upon the King as before, then they will deny paying toll, tribute, and custom. So it is thus for all the world between God and mens souls, when a soul lives in way of meer dependance upon God, that sensibly he sees God hath him at advantage every moment, Oh! then such a soul will pay toll and custom, that soul exercises faith, & begs every day his dayly bread; but if God hedges that man about with an estate, with prosperity, perhaps he hath an inheritance befallen him, perhaps he hath a constant Office that brings in so much yearly to him duly payd, this man is not so sensible now of his dependance upon God, he begins now to pay less toll & custom to God than before, God hath less service from this man now than before, God sees it better for people to live

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in a depending condition: we are very loth, in respect of God, to be dependant, we would be all Independants this way, we would be of our selves, and have no dependance upon the Lord, but God sees it better for us to live in a depending condition.

Further, This may be thy comfort, though for outward things thou art mightily unsetled, yet for the great things of the soul and eternall estate, there thou art setled, thou hast a setled way, a constant way of fetching supply, *Of his fulnes we receive grace for grace*, thou hast there abundance of treasure to go to, and fetch all that thou standest in need of; and observe it, that now thy condition is more setled in the Covenant of grace than it was in the Covenant of works; in the Covenant of works there God gave man a stock to trade with, but he put it in his own hand, so that he might trade, and get or lose; but now in the Covenant of Grace, God makes sure, the stock is kept in the hand of Christ, and we must go to him for supply continually, for Christ keeps the stock; perhaps we may trifle away somewhat in our trading, but God takes that care still we shall never spend the stock: As a man when his son breaks, having squandred away his stock that he gave him before, afterwards he puts his stock into a friends hand, and, saith he, you shall keep the stock, and it shall not be at his dispose; so are we in a more setled condition, in respect of our eternall estate, than *Adam* was in innocencie: therefore let that comfort us in all our unsetled condition in the matters of the world.

The eleventh PLEA.

But yet there's another reasoning, that many murmuring hearts think to feed their humour withall, (say they) *If I never had been in a better condition, then I could bear this affliction, if God had always kept me in so low a condition, I could be content, Oh! but there was a time that I prospered more, and I had things at more full hand, and therefore now it is harder to me to be brought low; as in these times, perhaps a man that had five or six hundred a yeer, but now hath had nothing for a great while, if that man had not been born to so much, or never had prospered in any higher degree than now he is in, this affliction had been less, perhaps he hath some money and friends to live upon, but if he had never been in a better condition, he would not have accounted it so great a matter to have been without it now. This, many times is our greatest wound, that once we were in a better condition; and this is the most unreasonable thing for us to murmur upon this ground if any.*

For first, Is the eye evil, because God hath been good to thee heretofore? It's an ill thing for us to have our eye evil because God is good to others, but to look upon our condition with an evil eye now, because God was once good to us; hath God done thee any wrong, because he was formerly more good to thee than he was to others?

Secondly, Thou didst heretofore more prosper. Did God heretofore give thee more prosperity? it was to prepare thee for afflictions; we should look at all our outward prosperity as a preparation to afflictions, if thou hadst done so thē, it would not have been so difficult for thee to have endured affliction now; when thou hadst a great estate, yet if thou hadst made use of this mercie

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of God to prepare thee for thy afflicted estate, then the change of thy estate would not be so grievous: That every Christian should do: Have I an estate now? I should prepare for poverty. Have I health now? I should prepare for sickness. Have I liberty? let me prepare my self for imprisonment: What know I what God may call me to? Have I comfort and peace now in my conscience? doth God shine upon me? while I have this, let me prepare for Gods withdrawing from me. Am I delivered from temptations? let me prepare now for the time of temptations; If thou wouldest do so, the change of thy condition would not be so grievous to thee. Marriners that are in a calm will prepare for storms, would they say, If we never had calms, we would bear storms? but now we have had calms so many years or weeks together, this is grievous: In thy calm thou art to prepare for storms, and the storm would be less: thou shouldest reason quite contrary, and say, Now I am in an afflicted condition, Oh! but blessed be God, *I was in a comfortable condition*, and blessed be God that he was aforehand with me in the waies of his mercie, this one consideration may help murmuring hearts. Dost thou murmur because once thou wert better? know God was beforehand with thee in the ways of mercy, thou shouldest rather think thus, I have lived for these many years (fourty years perhaps or more) in a comfortable condition, I have liv'd in health, and peace, and plenty, what though the remaining part of my time have some sorrow and affliction? The Lord hath granted to me a comfortable sun-shine all the day long till towards evening, and what if at seven or eight a clock at night it begins to rain? let me thank God I have had so fair weather all day. You that are going a voyage, if you have a comfortable wind, and very fair for many moneths together, what if you have a little storm when you are within sight of land, will you murmur and repine? Oh no, but rather bless God that you have had such a comfortable voyage so long: Oh! this consideration would help us all: If it were so that now God should say, Well, you shall never see comfortable day more for outward things in this world, Oh! then you have cause to fall down and bless Gods Name, that you have had so many comfortable days: now you reason quite contrary, whereas you should bless God that you have had so much comfort, you make what you have had before to be an aggravation to your afflictions now, and so murmur and are discontented. That which God gave you before, upon what terms did you hold it? did you hold it so as you have in your writings, *To have and to hold for ever*, God gives no such thing, God gives to no man (I say) any thing but grace to run upon the tenour, there's no such thing in all Gods writings for any outward comforts, *To have and to hold for you and your heirs*, indeed for grace he doth give it to your selves, *to have and to hold for ever*, though not for every one that comes out of your loins to have and to hold for ever; God doth not give any outward thing so upon any such tenour as that is; if God gives me an understanding of himself, and faith, and humility, and love, and patience, and such graces of his Spirit, he gives them me for ever, If he gives me Himself, and his Christ, and his Promise, and his Covenant, he gives me them for ever, what am I therefore that the Sun should allways shine upon me, that I must have fair weather all my days? that which God gives to me, he gave it

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to me as a pledge of his love, let me return it to him as a pledge of my obedience, there's all the reaſon in the world for it, all that a godly man receives from God, he receives it as a pledge of Gods love to him, therefore when he comes into an afflicted condition, ſaith God, Return to me as a pledge for your obedience that, that you had from me as a pledge of my love; we ſhould cheerfully come in to God, and bleſs God; that we have any thing to render unto him as a pledge of our obedience, and ſay, Oh! it is thy love O Lord that hath given us any thing, that doth enable us to render a pledge of our obedience to thee. When God calls for thy eſtate or any comforts that thou haſt, God calls for it as a pledge of thy obedience to him.

The twelfth PLEA.

Another reaſoning of a murmuring heart is this. *Oh! but after I have taken a great deal of pains for ſuch a comfort, yet then I am croſt in it; after a great deal of labour and pains that I have taken, now to be croſt, Oh! this goes very hard.*

Firſt, I anſwer, The greater croſs, the more obedience and ſubmiſſion.

Secondly. When thou didſt take a great deal of pains, was it not with ſubmiſſion to God? Didſt thou take pains with reſolution, that thou muſt have ſuch a thing when thou laboureſt for it? Then know, that thou laboureſt not as a Chriſtian, but if thou did'ſt labour and take pains, was it not with reſignation to God? Lord, I am taking pains in the way of my calling, but with ſubmiſſion, I depend wholly upon thee for ſucceſs and a bleſſing; And what was it that thou didſt aim at in thy labour? was it not that thou mighteſt walk with God in the place that God had ſet thee? A Chriſtian ſhould do ſo in his outward calling, I am diligent in my outward calling, but it is, that I might obey God in it; it's true, I do it that I might provide for my family, but the chief thing that I aim at is, That I might yield obedience to God in the way that God hath ſet me: Now if God calls thee to another condition to obey him in, though it be by ſuffering, thou wilt do it if thy heart be right,

Thirdly, There will be the more teſtimony of thy love to God, if ſo be thou ſhalt now yield up thy ſelf to God in that that coſt thee dear. Shall I offer that to God (ſaith *David*) that coſt me nothing? thy outward comforts hath coſt thee much, and thou haſt taken much pains to obtain them, and now if thou canſt ſubmit to God in the want of them, (I ſay) in this thy love is more ſhown, that thou canſt offer that to God that coſt thee dear. Now theſe are the principall reaſonings of a diſcontented heart.

The thirteenth PLEA.

There's one Plea more that may be nam'd, and that is this, ſaith ſome, *Though I confeſs my affliction is ſomewhat hard, and I feel ſome trouble within me, yet I thank God I break not out in diſcontented ways to the diſhonour of God, I keep in, although I have much ado with my own heart.*

Oh!

Oh! do not ſatisfie your ſelves with that, for the diſtempers of your hearts, and their ſinfull workings are as words before God. *My ſoul be ſilent to God:* That we ſpake of in the beginning of the opening of this Scripture, it is not enough for thy tongue to be ſilent; but thy ſoul muſt be ſilent, there may be a ſullen diſcontentedneſs of heart, as well as diſcontentedneſs manifeſted in words; and if thou doeſt not mortifie that inward ſullenneſs, if thou beeſt afflicted a little more, it will break forth at laſt.

And thus the Lord, I hope, hath met with the chief *Reaſonings* and *Pleas* for our diſcontent in our conditions. I beſeech you in the name of God conſider theſe things, and becauſe they do concern your own hearts, you may ſo much the better remember them; I had thought to have made a little enterance into the next Head, and that is ſome way of helping you to this Grace of Contentment. It is a moſt excellent Grace, of admirable uſe as you have heard; and the contrarie is very ſinfull and vile.

Sermon XI.

PHILIPPIANS 4. 11.

For I have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content.

NOw we are coming to the cloſe of this point of *Contentment* that Jeſus Chriſt doth teach thoſe that are in his School: we have opened the point unto you, and ſhewed you wherein the Art, and Skill, and Myſterie of Chriſtian Contentment lies; and divers things in the way of application rebuking the want of this; and the laſt day I finiſhed that point of ſhewing the ſeveral Reaſonings of a murmuring and discontented heart. I ſhall now (as being deſireous to make an end) leave what was ſaid, and proceed to what remains. There are onely theſe two things for the working of your hearts to this Grace of Chriſtian Contentment.

Firſt, The propounding of ſeveral CONSIDERATIONS for the contenting of the heart in any afflicted condition.

Secondly, the propounding of DIRECTIONS what ſhould be done for the working of our hearts unto this.

The Firſt CONSIDERATION.

We ſhould conſider (in all our wants and inclinations to diſcontent) *The great-*

greatness of the mercies that we have, and the meanness of the things that we want. The things we want, (if we be godly) they are things of very small moment, in comparison to the things we have, and the things we have are things of very great moment; for the most part, that that people are discontent and murmur for the want of, it is, because they have not such things as reprobates have, or may have; why shouldst thou be troubled so much for the want of that that a man or woman may have, and yet be a reprobate, as that thy estate is not so great, thy health not so perfect, thy credit not so much, thou mayst have all those things, and yet be a reprobate; now wilt thou be discontent for that that a reprobate may have? I shall give you the example of a couple of godly men meeting together, *Anthonie* and *Diddimus*, *Diddimus* was blind, and yet a man of very excellent parts and graces, *Anthonie* ask'd him if he was not troubled at this his want of sight, he confest he was, but (saith he) shall you be troubled at the want of what dogs and flies have, and not rather rejoyce and be thankfull that you have what Angels have? God hath given you those good things that makes Angels glorious, is not that enough to you, though you want that thing a flie hath? And so a Christian should reason the case with himself; What am I discontented for? I am discontented for want of that that a dog may have, that a Devil may have, that a reprobate may have; shall I be discontent for not having that, when as God hath given me that that makes angels glorious? *Blessed be God* (saith the Apostle in *Ephes.* 1. 3.) *that hath blessed us with all Spiritual blessings in Heavenly places.* It may be thou hast not so great blessings in earthly places as some others have, but if the Lord hath blessed thee in heavenly places, that should content thee, there's blessings in heaven, and he hath set thee here, for the present, as it were in heaven, in a heavenly place; The consideration of the greatness of the mercies that we have, and the littleness of the things that God hath denied us, is a very powerfull consideration to work this grace of Contentment.

The Second CONSIDERATION.

The Consideration, *That God being beforehand with us with his mercies, should content us* (I spake to this as an aggravation of our discontent, but now I shall use it as a consideration to help us to Contentment) Thou wantest many comforts now, but hath not God been beforehand with thee heretofore? O thou hast had mercie enough already to make thee spend all the strength thou hast, and time thou shalt live, to bless God for what thou hast had already. I remember, I have read of a good man that had liv'd to fiftie years of age, and enjoyed his health for eight and fourtie years exceeding well, and lived in prosperitie, and the two last years his bodie was exceedingly diseased, he had the strangurie, and was in great pain; but he reasoned the case with himself thus; O Lord! thou mightest have made all my life to have been a life of torment and pain, but thou hast let me have eight and fortie years in health: I will praise thy mercies for what I have had, and will praise thy justice for what now I feel. O it's a good consideration for us to think, that God is beforehand with us in the way of mercie: Suppose God should now take away

your

your estates from some of you that have lived comfortably a great while, you will say, That aggravates our miserie that we have had estates; but it is through thy unthankfulness that it doth so; we should bless God for what we have had, and not think that we are worse, because we have had thus and thus, we might have been always miserable, and certainly that mans condition is not very miserable, that hath no other great aggravation of his misery, but because once he was happie; If there be nothing else to make you miserable, that is no such aggravation, but that thou mayest bear it, for there is much mercie in that thou hadst once, and therefore let that content thee.

The Third CONSIDERATION.

The Consideration of the abundance of mercies that God bestows, and we enjoy. It is a speech of *Luther* (saith he) The Sea of Gods mercies, should swallow up all our particular afflictions, name any affliction that is upon thee, there's a Sea of mercie to swallow it up. If you pour a pail full of water on the floor of your house, it makes a great show, but if you throw it into the Sea, there is no appearance of it; so afflictions, considered in themselves, we think they are very great, but let them be considered with the Sea of Gods mercies we do enjoy, then they are not so much, they are nothing in comparison.

The Fourth CONSIDERATION.

Consider the way of God towards all creatures; God carries on all creatures in a vicissitude of several conditions, as thus; We have not alway Summer, but Winter succeeds Summer; we have not always Day, but day & Night; we have not always fair weather, but fair & foul; the vegetive creatures do not always flourish, but the sap is in the root, and they seem as if they were dead: there's a vicissitude of all things in the world: the Sun doth not shine always to us here, but there is darkness comes after light; now, seeing God hath so ordered things with all creatures, that there is a mixture of conditions; why should we think it much, that there should be a vicissitude of conditions with us, sometimes in a way of prosperitie, and sometimes in a way of affliction.

The Fifth CONSIDERATION.

A further Consideration is this, *The creatures do suffer for us, why should not we be willing to suffer, to be serviceable to God?* God subjects other creatures, they are fain to lose their lives for us, to lose what ever beautie and excellencie they have to be serviceable to us, why should not we be willing to part with any thing in way of service for God; certainly there is not so great a distance between other creatures and Mankind, as there is between Mankind & God. 'Tis an expression of that Martyr Master *Hooper*, that we read of in the Book of Martyrs, in labouring to work his own heart, and the hearts of others to contentedness in the midst of his sufferings; he hath this similitude, and you may be put in mind of that every day, (saith he) I look upon the creature,

ture, and ſee what it ſuffers to be uſefull to me; as thus, The brute beaſts muſt die, muſt be roſt in the fire, and boyl'd, muſt come upon the trencher, be hackt all in pieces, muſt be chewed in the mouth, and in the ſtomach turn'd to that which is loathſom, if one ſhould behold it, and all to nouriſh me, to be uſeful to my body; and ſhall not I be willing to be made any thing for God, for his ſervice? what abundance of alterations the creature comes under to be made uſefull for me, to preſerve me; then if God will do ſo with me for his uſe, as he doth ſubject the creatures to me for my uſe, why ſhould not I reſt contented? If God will take away my eſtate, and make me poor, if God will take away my life, hack me in pieces, put me in priſon, whatſoever he doth, yet I ſhall not ſuffer more for God than the creature doth for me, and ſurely I am infinitely more bound to God than the creature is to me, and there is not ſo much difference between me and the creature, as between me and God: ſuch conſiderations as theſe wrought the heart of that Martyr to contentedneſs in his ſufferings. And every time the creature is upon your trenchers you may think, What! doth God make the creature ſuffer for my uſe? not onely for my nouriſhment, but for my delight: what am I then in reſpect of the infinite God?

The Sixth CONSIDERATION.

Another Conſideration for the working of Contentment, it is, *To conſider that we have but a little time in this world:* If thou beeſt godly, thou ſhalt never ſuffer but onely in this world; why, do but ſhut your eyes, & preſently another life is come, as that Martyr ſaid to his fellow Martyr: do but ſhut your eies, (ſaith he) and the next time they are opened, you ſhall be in another world. *Athanaſius* ſaith, it is but a little cloud (when he was baniſhed) and it will be over (notwithſtanding) preſently. Theſe afflictions they are but for a moment. A Mariner, when he is abroad, doth not think it much if a ſtorm ariſes, eſpecially if he can ſee the Heavens cleer beyond it, ſaith he, it will be over preſently. Conſider, we have not long to live, it may be it may be over before our daies be at an end, but ſuppoſe it ſhould not, death will put an end to all, all afflictions and troubles will ſoon be at an end by death.

The Seventh CONSIDERATION.

Conſider the condition that others have been in that have been our betters. We made ſome uſe of that before to ſhew the evil of diſcontentment: But further to work this upon our hearts, it is a mighty Argument to work upon our hearts a contentedneſs in any condition.

Thou many times doeſt conſider who are above thee, but conſider who are under thee.

Jacob that was the heir both of *Abraham* and *Iſaac*, for the bleſſing was upon him, and the Promiſe ran along in him, yet was in a poor mean condition. *Abraham* that was his Grand-father was able to make a kind of Army of his own houſhold, 300. to fight with a King, yet *Jacob* his Grand-child he goes over Jordan with a ſtaff, and lives in a very poor and mean condition for a long time: and *Moſes* that might have had all the treaſures in *Egypt*, and as ſome Hiſtorians ſay of him, *Pharaohs* Daughter adopted him for her ſon,

becauſe *Pharaoh* had no heir for the Crown, and ſo he was like to have come to the Crown, yet what a low condition did he live in, when he went to live with *Jethro* his Father-in-law 40. years together, afterward when he returned to *Egypt*, he and his wife and children, and all that he had, and yet he had but one beaſt to carry him to *Egypt*, he went in a mean condition when he went from his Father-in-law to *Egypt* back again.

And *Elijah*, we know how he was fed with Ravens, and how he was fain to ſhift for his life from time to time, and run into the wilderneſs up & down: and ſo did *Eliſha*, he was divers times in a very low condition, the Prophets of God they were to be hid in a Cave by *Obadiah*, and there to be fed with bread and water, and the Prophet *Jeremiah* put into a Dungeon, and Oh how was he uſed! and it were an endleſs thing to name the particulars of the great ſufferings of the people of God. In former time we have ſometimes made uſe of this Argument other waies; the great Inſtruments of God in the firſt Reformation, they lived in great ſtraights, in a very low condition, even *Luther* himſelf when he was to die (ſaith he) Lord (though he were a man of ſuch publick uſe, and was a great man in the Courts of Princes) Lord, I have neither Houſe nor Lands, nor Eſtate to leave any thing to Wife or Children, but I commit them to thee: and ſo *Muſculus*, that was a very choiſe Inſtrument of God in his time, though he were a man that was worth even a Kingdom for the excellency of his ſpirit, and learning, for he was one of the learneſt men of his time, yet ſometimes he was put to dig in the common ditch to get bread for his family. What would we do if we were in ſuch a condition as theſe men were? But above all ſet Chriſt before us, that profeſſes that the Birds of the air had neſts, and the Foxes had holes, yet the Son of man had no place to hide his head in, that low condition he was in; the conſideration of ſuch things as theſe are very uſeful. It is likewiſe uſeful for men and women of eſtates to go to poor peoples houſes, and ſee how they live, to go to Hoſpitals, and to ſee the wounds of Souldiers and others, and to ſee the lamentable condition that people live in that live in ſome Almſs-houſes: and what poor fare they have, and what ſtraights they are put to; you hear ſometimes of them, but if you went to ſee them, it would not onely ſtir up charity in your ſelves towards them, but ſtir up thankfulneſs in your hearts towards God, it would be a ſpecial means to help you againſt any diſcontent, you would go away & ſee cauſe to bleſs God, and ſay, If I were in ſuch a condition as they are in, what ſhould I do? how could I bear it? and yet what reaſon is there that God doth ſo order and diſpoſe of things, that they ſhould be ſo low in their eſtates, and I ſo high: I know no reaſon but free grace, God will have mercie upon whom he will have mercie: Theſe are ſome good Conſiderations for the furtherance of Contentment.

The Eighth CONSIDERATION.

A further Conſideration may be this, *That before your converſion, before God wrought upon your ſouls, you were contented then with the world without grace, though you had no intereſt in God nor Chriſt; why cannot you now be contented with*

with grace and ſpiritual things without the world? If you your ſelves were content with the world without grace, there's reaſon you ſhould be content with grace without the world? Certainly ther's infinitely more reaſon. Yea, you ſee that many men of the world have a kind of Contentment, do not murmur nor repine when the world comes, though they have no intereſt in God & Chriſt: Then can'ſt not thou have as much Contentment with God and Chriſt without the world, as they can with the world without God & Chriſt? This is infinite ſhame it ſhould be ſo.

The Ninth CONSIDERATION.

Yea, conſider when God hath given thee ſuch Contentment, thou haſt not given him the glory. When God hath let thee have thy hearts deſire, what haſt thou done with thy hearts deſire? thou haſt not been the better for it, it may be thou haſt been the worſe many times, and therefore let that ſatisfie thee: I meet with croſſes, but when I had Contentment, and all things coming in, God had but little or no glory from me, and therefore let that be a means now to quiet me in my diſcontented thoughts.

The Tenth CONSIDERATION.

Yealaſtly, Conſider all the experience that you have of Gods doing good unto you in the want of many comforts. When God croſſes you, have you never had experience of abundance of good in afflictions? It's true, when a Miniſter onely tels men that God will work good out of their afflictions, they hear them ſpeak, and think they ſpeak like good men, but they feel little or no good, they feel nothing but pain; but when we cannot onely ſay to you, that God hath ſaid he will work good out of your afflictions, but we can ſay to you, that you your ſelves have found it ſo by experience, that God had made former afflictions to be great benefits to you, and that you would not have been without them, or without the good that came by them for a world; ſuch experiences will exceedingly quiet the heart, and work it to Contentment: therefore think thus with thy ſelf, Lord, why may not this affliction work as great a good upon me as afflictions have done heretofore? Perhaps you may find many other Conſiderations beſides in your own meditations, theſe are the principal ones that I have thought upon: I'le onely adde one word more to this, of one that once was a great Merchant and Trades-man, and it happened on a time that he ſuffered Shipwrack, and ſaith he, I never made a better voyage, & ſail'd better than at that time that I ſuffered Ship-wrack: this was a ſtrange ſpeech (his name was *Zeno*) that he ſhould never make a better voyage: it would be a ſtrange paradox to you that are Marriners, to ſay, that thats a good voyage when you ſuffer Ship-wrack: but he meant, becauſe he got ſo much good by it, God was pleaſed to bleſs it ſo far to him, that he gained ſo much unto his ſoul by it, ſo much ſoul riches, that he made account it was the beſt voyage that ever he had: and truly, ſometimes it is ſo, yea, to yon that are godly, I make no queſtion but you find it ſo, that your worſt voyages

have proved your beſt, when you have met with the greateſt croſſes in a voyage, God hath been pleaſed to turn them to a greater good to you in ſome other way. It's true, we may not deſire croſſes that they may be turned to other advantages; but when God in his providence doth ſo order things, that you meet with ill voyages, you may expect that God will turn them to a greater good, and thoſe that have been exerciſed in the waies of Godlineſs any long time, I make no queſtion but they have abundance of experiences that they have gain'd by them: You know ſometimes it's better to be in a little Ship, for they have advantage of greater ones in ſtorms many times, in a ſtorm a little Ship can thruſt into a ſhallow place, and ſo be ſafe, but your great Ships cannot, they muſt be abroad, and toſt up and down in the ſtorm and tempeſt, and ſo many times ſplit againſt the rocks. And ſo it may be God ſees there is a ſtorm a coming, and if thou beeſt in thy great Ship, thou maieſt ſplit upon rocks, & ſands, God therefore doth put thee into a leſſer veſſel that thou maieſt be more ſafe. We will lay aſide the ſpeaking of thoſe conſiderations now, but I would not have you lay them aſide, & put them out of your thoughts, but labour (thoſe eſpecially that moſt concern you) to make uſe of them in the needful time, when you find any diſcontentedneſs of ſpirit to ariſe in you.

But the main thing that I intented for this Exerciſe, It is propounding Directions what to do for the helping of our hearts to Contentment. For as for any further Conſiderations, we have prevented the ſpeaking largely of them, becauſe we have opened the moſt things in ſhewing what the Leſſons are that Chriſt teaches men, when he brings them into his School, to teach them this Art. I ſay there we have ſpoken of the ſpecial things that are moſt conſiderable for the helping of us to this Grace of Contentment. Therefore now all that I ſhall further do about this point, ſhall be the giving of ſome Directions what courſe to take, that we may come to attain this Grace of Contentment.

The Firſt DIRECTION.

The Firſt is this, All the rules and helps in the world will do us little good, except we get a good temper within in our hearts; you can never make a Ship go ſteady with propping of it without, you know there muſt be ballaſt within the Ship, that muſt make it go ſteady: And ſo there is nothing without us that can keep our hearts in a ſteady conſtant way, but that which is within us, Grace is within the ſoul and that will do it.

The Second DIRECTION.

Secondly, If you would get a contented life, do not gripe too much of the world, do not take in more of the buſineſs of the world than God calls you to, be not greedy of taking in a great deal of the world, for if a man will go among thorns when he may go in a plainer way, there is not reaſon that this man ſhould complain that he is prickt with them; thou goeſt among thorns, is it thy way? muſt you of neceſſity go among them; then it's another matter,

matter, but if thou wilt electively chuſe that way when thou mayeſt go another, then thou haſt no cauſe to complain; ſo for men and women that will put themſelves upon things of the World that they need not, then no marveil though they be prickt, and meet with that that doth diſquiet them; for ſuch is the nature of all things here in the World, that every thing hath ſome prick or other in it, we are like to meet with diſappointments, and diſcontentments in every thing we meddle with, and therefore thoſe that have leaſt to do in the World, (that is, except God calls them to it, we muſt put in that) they are like to meet with many things that will diſcontent them.

The Third DIRECTION.

Thirdly, Be ſure of thy call to every buſineſs thou goeſt about, though it be in the leaſt buſineſs, be ſure of thy call to it: then whatever thou meeteſt withall, thou mayeſt quiet thy heart with this, I know I am where God would have me; there is nothing in the World will quiet the heart ſo much as this; when I meet with any croſs, I know I am where God would have me in my place and calling, I am about the work that God hath ſet me: Oh this will quiet and content thee when thou meeteſt with trouble: that that God calls a man to, with that he may have comfort whatever befalls him, God is to look to thee, and to ſee thee bleſt if thou beeſt in the work God calls thee to.

The Fourth DIRECTION.

And eſpecially if I add a fourth Rule, and that is, *That I walk by rule in that work I am called to.* I am called to ſuch a buſineſs, but I muſt mannage this work that I am called to by Rule, I muſt walk by the Word, order my ſelf in this buſineſs according to Gods mind, ſo far as I am able, then add this to the other, and then the quiet and peace of that ſoul may be made even perfect in a kind, when I know it is not the work I put my ſelf upon, but God hath called me to it, and I walk by the Rule of the word in it, then let come what will come, God he is to take care of me there. It was a ſpeech of a Heathen (ſaith he) if thou wilt ſubject all things to thy ſelf, do thou ſubject thy ſelf to reaſon, and by that thou wilt make all things to be under thee; I may add a little more to it, if you will ſubject all things under you, ſubject your ſelf to God, and then the truth is all things are under you; It hath been that that many times we have hinted, the reaſon why many of our Gentry have been ſo malignant among us is, becauſe they are willing to be ſlaves themſelves under ſome above them at Court, ſo they may keep their neighbours under to be ſlaves to them: for you know any man heretofore that was great at the Court, he could cruſh any Country man that he was angrie withall. If there were an Arbitrarie Government, then all thoſe that would be willing to be vaſſals and ſlaves to the Prince, they can make all others vaſſals and ſlaves to them. Now be thou willing to be a vaſſal to God, to be abſolutely under Gods command, and then (I ſay) all things in the World are under thee, *All are yours* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *Life and Death*, every thing is yours,

and you are Christs, and Christ is Gods: All things in the World are serviceable to that man or woman that is serviceable to God. It is a mighty commendation of Gods service, be thou willing to be serviceable to God, and God makes all things in the World to be thy servants, for so they are. You will say, How are they my servants, I cannot command them? They are servants in this, that God doth order them all to work for thy good, there is nothing in the World, but, (saith God) it shall work for thy good, and be serviceable to thee, if thou wilt be serviceable to me; who would not be now Gods servant? Subject thy self to God, and all things shall be subjected to thee. Now so long as we keep within our bounds, we are under protection, but if once we break our bounds, we must expect it should be with us as it is with the Deer in the Park; while the Deer keeps within the pale, there is no Dogs come upon them, but they can feed quietly, but let the Deer be got without the pale, and then every Dog in the Countrey will be hunting after them: so it is with men, let men and women keep within the bounds of the command of God, of the rule that God hath set them in his word, and then they are protected by God, and they may go about their business with peace, and never be troubled for any thing, but cast all their care upon God, God provides for them, but if they will go beyond the pale, if they will pass their bounds, then they may expect to meet with troubles, and afflictions, and discontents; and therefore that is a fourth direction. Walk by rule.

The fifth DIRECTION.

A fifth rule is this, *Exercise much faith, that is the way for contentedness.* After thou hast done with all considerations that reason may suggest to thee, if thou findest that these do not do it, Oh then call for grace of Faith, a man may go very far with the use of reason alone to help him to Contentment, but when reason is at a non-plus, then set Faith a work. It was a speech of the reverend Divine master *Perkins*, that God made so instrumental in his time: the life of Faith (saith he) it is a true life indeed, the onely life. Exercise Faith, not onely in that promise that all shall work together for good to them that fear God, but likewise exercise faith in God himself, as well as in his Word, in the attributes of God. It was a speech of *Socrates* a Heathen, (saith he) since God is so carefull for you, what need you be carefull for any thing your selves? It was a strange speech of a Heathen.

Oh Christian! if thou hast any Faith, in the time of extremity think thus, This is the time that God calls for the exercise of Faith, what canst thou do with thy faith, if thou canst not quiet thy heart in discontent? It was the speech of one *Theodosius* that had been a King, and afterwards was brought to such a low condition to get his living by being a School-master, one comes and asks him, What have you got by your Phylosophy from *Plato* and others? What have I got (saith he) I have got this, That though my condition be changed from so high a condition to so low, yet I have got this, I can be content. So what dost thou get by being a believer, a Christian? what canst thou do by thy Faith? I can do this, I can in all estates cast my care upon God, cast my

burden

burden upon God, I can commit my way to God in peace, Faith can do this. Therefore when reason can go no higher, let Faith get upon the shoulders of reason and say, I see land, though reason cannot see it, I see good that will come out of all this evil.

Exercise Faith in thy often resignation of thy self to God, in giving of thy self up to God and his ways, the more thou dost in a believing way surrender up thy self to God, the more quiet and peace wilt thou have; that is the fifth thing.

The sixth DIRECTION.

The sixth direction for Contentment is, *To labour to be spiritually minded*; that is, be often in meditation of the things that are above, *If we be risen with Christ* (saith the Scripture) *let us seek the things that are above, where Christ is that sits at the right hand of God.* Be much in spiritual thoughts, in conversing with things above; many Christians that have an interest in the things of Heaven, yet converse but very little with them, their meditations are not much upon Heavenly things. It is that that some give as the reason why *Adam* did not see his nakedness, some think that he had so much converse with God and with things above Sence, that he did not so much mind or think of nakedness what it was: but whether that were so or no I will not say, but this I say and am certain of, the reason why we are so troubled with our nakednesses, with any wants that we have, it is because we converse so little with God, so little with spiritual things, the conversing with spiritual things would lift us above the things of the World; Those that are bit or stung with a Snake, it is because they tread upon the ground, if they could be lifted up above the earth, they need never fear to be stung with the Snakes that are crawling underneath: so I may compare the sinfull distemper of murmuring, and the temptations and evils that comes from thence to be like Snakes that crawl up and down below, but if we could get higher, we should not be stung by them. A Heavenly conversation is the way for Contentment. *Colos.* 3. 1

The seventh DIRECTION.

A seventh rule is, *Do not promise to your selves too much before-hand, do not make account of too great things*: It is good for us to take hold very low and not think to pitch too high, do not soar too high in your thoughts before hand, to think, Oh if I had this and this, and imagine great matters to your selves, but be as good *Jacob*, you know he was a man that lived a very contented life in a mean condition, (saith he) *Lord if I may but have cloaths to put on, and meat to eat*; he look'd no higher, he was content with that: so if we would not pitch our thoughts high, and think that we might have what others have, so much, and so much, when we meet with disappointments, we would not be so much troubled: and so *Paul*, *If we have but meat and drink and cloathing, let us be therewith content*; he did not soar too high aloft, those that look at high things in the World, they meet with disappointments, and so they come to

be discontent; be as high as you will in spiritual meditations, God gives liberty there to any one of you to be as high as you will, above Angels, but for your outward estate, God would not have you aim at high things, *Seekest thou great things?* (saith the Lord to *Baruch*) *seek them not, you shall have your life for a prey.* In these times especially, it were a very great evil for any to aim at great things. *Seek them not*, be willing to take hold low, and to creep low, and if God doth raise thee, thou shalt have cause to bless him, but if thou shouldst not be raised, there would not be much trouble, one that creeps low cannot fall far, but it is those that are on high, whose fall doth bruise them most, that is a good rule, Promise not your selves great matters, neither aim at any great things in the world.

The eighth DIRECTION.

Labour to get your hearts mortified to the world, dead to the World: We must not content our selves that we have gotten some reasoning about the vanity of the creature, and such kind of things as these are, but we must exercise mortification, and be crucified to the World, saith *Paul, I die daily*, we should die daily to the World, *We are baptized into the death of Christ*, that is to signifie that we have taken such a profession, as to profess to be even as dead men to the World; now there are no crosses that falls out in the World that doth trouble those that are dead, if our hearts were dead to the World, we should not be much troubled with the changes of the World, nor the tossings about of Worldly things. As it is very observable in those Souldiers that came to break the bones of Christ, they brake the legs of one that was crucified with him, and of the other, but when they came to Christ, they found he was dead, and so they did not break his legs, there was a providence in it, to fulfill a Prophesie, but because they found he was dead, they did not break his bones. Let afflictions and trouble find thee with a mortified heart to the World, and they will not break thy bones; the bones of those that are broken by crosses and afflictions, are those that are alive to the World, that are not dead to the world; but one that hath a mortified heart, and dead to the World, no afflictions or troubles will break the bones of such a one, that is, they will not be very grievous or painfull to such a one as is mortified to the World: This I fear is a mysterie and riddle to many, for one to be dead to the World, to be mortified to the World. Now it is not my work to open to you what mortification is, or death to the World is, but onely thus, To have our hearts so taken off from the things of the World, as to use them as if one used them not, not to make account that our lives, our comforts, our happiness doth consist in these things, they are things that are of another nature that our happiness doth consist in, and we may be happy without these, this is a kind of deadness to the World.

The Ninth DIRECTION.

Let not men and women pore too much upon their afflictions, that is, busie their thoughts too much to look down into their afflictions; you shall have many people

people, that all their thoughts are taken up about what their crosses and afflictions are, they are altogether thinking and speaking of them, it is just with them as with a child that hath a sore about him, his finger is always upon the sore; and some men and women, their thoughts are always upon their afflictions, when they awake in the night, their thoughts are upon their afflictions, and when they converse with others (nay it may be when they are praying to God) they are thinking of their afflictions. Oh! no marveil though you live a discontented life, if your thoughts be always poring upon such things, you should rather labour to have your thoughts upon those things that may comfort you: You shall have many, that if you propound any rule to them to do them good, they take it well while they are with you, and thank you for it, but when they are gone, they soon forget it. It is very observable of *Jacob*, that when his wife died in child birth, his wife called the child *Ben oni*, that is, a Son of sorrows; now *Jacob*, he thought with himself, if I should call this child *Ben-oni*, every time that I name him, it will put me in mind of the death of my dear wife, and of that affliction, and that will be a continued affliction to me, therefore I will not have my child have that name; and so the Text saith, that *Jacob* called his name *Benjamin*, and that was, the son of my right hand: now this is to shew us thus much, that when affliction befalls us, we should not give way to have our thoughts continually upon them, but rather upon those things that may stir up our thankfulness to God for mercies. It is the similitude of *Basil*, a learned man, saith he, It is in this case as it is with men and women that have sore eyes, now it is not fit for those to be always looking upon the fire, or upon the beams of the Sun; no (saith he) one that hath sore eyes must get things that are suitable to him, and such objects that are fit for one that hath such weak eyes, therefore they will get green colours, as that being a more easie colour, and better for weak eyes, and they will hang a green Sarsnet before their eyes, because it is more suitable to them: So weak spirits it is the very same, a man or woman that hath a weak spirit, they must not be looking upon the fire of their afflictions, upon those things that deject, that cast them down, but they are to be looking rather upon that which may be suitable for the healing and helping of them, they should be considering of those things rather than the other. It will be of very great use and benefit to you, if you do lay it to heart, not to be poring always upon afflictions, but upon mercies.

The Tenth DIRECTION.

I beseech you observe this, though you should forget many others. *Make a good interpretation of Gods ways towards you*, if there can be any good interpretation made of Gods ways towards you, make it. You think it much if you have a friend that should always make bad interpretations of your ways towards him, you will take that ill: If you should converse with people that you cannot speak a word in their hearing, but they are ready to make an ill interpretation of it, and take it in an ill sense, you would think their company to be very tedious to you. It is very tedious to the Spirit of God, when we

make

make ſuch ill interpretations of his ways towards us. If God deals with us otherwiſe than we would have him, if there can be any ſenſe worſe than other made of it, we will be ſure to make it; as thus: When an affliction doth befall you, there may be many good ſenſes made of Gods works towards you, you ſhould think thus, It may be God intends onely to trie me by this, it may be God ſaw my heart too much ſet upon the Creature, and ſo intends to ſhew me what there is in my heart, it may be that God ſaw that if my eſtate did continue, I ſhould fall into ſin, that the better my eſtate were, the worſe my Soul would be, it may be God intended onely to exerciſe ſome grace, it may be God intends to prepare me for ſome great work which he hath for me. Thus you ſhould reaſon.

But we on the contrarie make bad interpretations of Gods thus dealing with us, and ſay, God doth not mean this, ſurely the Lord means by this, to manifeſt his wrath and diſpleaſure againſt me, and this is but a furtherance of further evils that he intends towards me: Juſt as they did in the wilderneſs, *God hath brought us hither to ſlay us.* This is the worſt interpretation that poſſibly you can make of Gods ways: Oh! why will you make theſe worſt interpretations when there may be better? In 1. *Cor.* 13. 5. when the Scripture ſpeaks of Love, ſaith the Text, *Love thinketh no evil.* Love is of that nature, that if there may be ten interpretations made of a thing, if nine of them be naught, and one good, Love will take that which is good, and leave the other nine; & ſo though there might be ten interpretations preſented to thee concerning Gods ways towards thee, and if but one be good and nine naught, thou ſhouldſt take that one that is good and leave the other nine. I beſeech you conſider, God doth not deal by you as you deal with him, ſhould God make the worſt interpretation of all your ways towards him, as you do of his towards you, it would be very ill with you, God is pleaſed to manifeſt his love thus to us, to make the beſt interpretations of what we do, and therefore it is, that God doth put a ſenſe upon the actions of his people that one would think could hardly be, as thus, God is pleaſed to call thoſe perfect that have but any uprightneſs of heart in them, he accounteth them perfect, *Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect*; uprightneſs in Gods ſenſe is perfection. Now alas when we look into our own hearts, we can ſcarce ſee any good at all there, and yet God is pleaſed to make ſuch an interpretation as to ſay, it is perfect: When we look into our own hearts we can ſee nothing but uncleaneſs, God, he calls you his Saints, he calls the meaneſt Chriſtian that hath the leaſt grace under the greateſt corruption, his Saint; you ſay, we cannot be Saints here, but yet in Gods eſteem we are Saints: You know the uſual title the holy Ghoſt gives (in ſeveral of the Epiſtles) to thoſe that had any grace, any uprightneſs, is, *To the Saints* in ſuch a place; you ſee what an interpretation God puts upon them, they are Saints to him, and ſo I might name in divers other particulars, God makes the beſt interpretation of things; if there be abundance of evil and a little good, God rather paſſes by the evil and takes notice of the good: That ſometimes I have made uſe of, which is a very obſervable place in *Peter*, concerning *Sarah*, *Sarah* had a ſpeech to her husband in *Geneſis* 18. 12. ſhe called her husband Lord, but there was but that one good word in an ill ſpeech, it was an unbelieving ſpeech, but yet

yet when the Apostle mentions that speech in 1. *Pet.* 3. 6. the holy Ghost leaves all the ill, and commends her for calling her husband Lord, for putting a reverend title upon her husband; thus how graciously doth God deal with us? If there be but one good word among a great many ill, what an interpretation God makes! so should we do, if there be but any one good interpretation that we can make of a thing, we should rather make use of the good one than of the ill; Oh my brethren, (I would I could now speak onely to such as are godly) retain good thoughts of God, take heed of judging God to be a hard master, make good interpretations of his ways, and that is a special means to help you to Contentment in all your courses.

The eleventh DIRECTION.

Do not so much regard the fancies of other men, as what indeed you feel your selves; for the reason of our discontentment many times is rather from the fancies of other men, than from what we find we want our selves; we think poverty to be such a great evil, why? because it is so esteem'd by others, more than what people feel in it themselves, except they be in extremity of poverty: I'le give you an evident demonstration, that almost all the discontent in the world is rather from the fancies of others, than from the evil that is upon themselves. You that think your estates to be low and you are thereupon discontent, and it is a grievous affliction to you, but if all men in the World were poorer than you, then you would not be discontent, then you would rejoyce in your estates though you had not a penny more than you have: As take a man that can get but his twelve pence a day, and you will say, this were but a poor thing to maintain a family? but suppose there were no man in the World that had more than this, yea, that all other men but your selves had somewhat less wages than you, then you would think your condition pretty good, you should have no more then than you have now, therefore it appears by this that it's rather from the fancies of other men than what you feel, that makes you think your condition to be so grievous, for if all the men in the World look upon you as happy, more happy than themselves then you would be contented; Oh let not your happiness depend upon the fancies of other men. It is a speech of *Chrysostom* I remember in this very case, Let us not make the people in this case to be our Lords, as we must not make men to be the Lords of our Faith, so not the Lords of our comforts; that is, that our comfort should depend more upon their imaginations, than upon what we feel in our selves. It may be others think you to be in an afflicted condition, yea, but I thank God, for my self I do not so apprehend it, were it not for the disgrace, dis-esteem and slightings of other men, my condition would not be so bad to me as now it is; this is that that makes my condition afflictive.

The twelfth DIRECTION.

Be not inordinately taken up with the comforts of this World when you have them. When you have them, do not take too much content in them: that is a certain

certain rule, that, 'Look how inordinate any man or woman is in sorrow when a comfort is taken from them, so much immoderate were they in the rejoycing in the comfort when they had it: as now for instance, God takes away a child, and you are inordinately sorrowfull, beyond what God allows in a natural or Christian way, now though I never knew before how your heart was towards the child, yet when I see this, (though you be a meer stranger to me) I may without breach of charity conclude that your heart was immoderately set upon your child or husband, or upon any other comfort that I see you grieving for, when God hath taken it away; If you hear ill tidings about your estates, and your hearts are dejected immoderately, and you are in a discontented way, because of such and such a cross, certainly your hearts were immoderately set upon the world; and so likewise for your credit, if you hear others report this or that ill of you, and your hearts are dejected because you think you suffer in your name, your hearts were inordinately set upon your name and credit; now therefore the way for you not to be immoderate in your sorrows for afflictions, it is not to be immoderate in your love and delights when you have prosperitie. And these are the principal directions for our help, that we may live quiet and contented lives.

My brethren, to conclude all for this point, If I could tell you that I knew how to shew you a way never to be in want of any thing, I make no question, but then we should have much flocking to such a Sermon, when a man should undertake to manifest to people that they should never be in want any more, but I have been now preaching unto you, that that comes to as much, that which countervails this, that which is in effect all one. Is it not almost all one never to be in want, or never to be without Contentment? that man or woman that is never without a contented spirit, truly, can never be said to want much, Oh! the Word holds forth a way full of comfort and peace to the people of God even in this world, you may live happy that lives in the midst of all the storms and tempests in the world, there is an Ark that you may come into, and no men in the world may live such comfortable, cheerfull, and contented lives as the Saints of God: Oh that we had learn'd this Lesson: I have been many Sermons about this Lesson of Contentment, but I am afraid that you will be longer in learning of it, than I have been preaching of it; it is a harder thing to learn it than it is to speak or preach of it. (I remember) I have read of one man reading of that place in the 39. *Psalm, I will take heed that I offend not with my tongue*: saith he, I have been this 38. years a learning this lesson, and have not learned it throughly. The truth is, there are many (I am afraid) that have been professours neer eight and thirty years, have hardly learn'd this lesson; it were a good lesson for young Professors to begin to learn this betimes. But now, this lesson of Christian Contentment, it is as hard, and perhaps you may be many years in learning it: I am afraid there be some Christians that have not yet learned, *Not to offend grosly with their tongues*: The Scripture saith, *All a mans Religion is vain, if he cannot bridle his tongue*; therefore, those that make any profession of godlines, one would think they should quickly learn this lesson, such a lesson that except learned it makes all their Religion vain: But for this lesson of Christian Contentment it may take up

more

more time to learn, and there's many that are learning it all the days of their lives, and yet are not Proficients; but God forbid that it ſhould be ſaid of any of us, concerning this Leſſon, as the Apoſtle ſaith of Widows, in *Timothie*; *That they were ever learning, and never came to the truth.* O let us not be ever learning this Leſſon of Contentment, and yet never come to have ſkill in it. You would think it much if you had uſed the Sea twentie years, and yet to have attained to no ſkill in your art of Navigation, you will ſay, I have uſed the Sea twentie or thirtie years, and I hope I may know by this time what belongs to sea; O that you would but ſay ſo in reſpect of the Art of Chriſtianitie! When there is any thing that's ſpoken concerning the dutie of a Chriſtian, O that Chriſtians could but ſay, I have been a Chriſtian thus long, and I hope I am not to ſeek in ſuch a thing that is ſo neceſſarie for a Chriſtian; here is a neceſſarie Leſſon for a Chriſtian, that *Paul* ſaid, *He had learned in all eſtates therewith to be content.* O be not content with your ſelves till you have learned this Leſſon of Chriſtian Contentment! gotten ſome better ſkill in it than heretofore.

Now there is in the Text another Leſſon, which is a hard Leſſon, *I have learned to Abound*, that doth not ſo nearly concern us at this time, becauſe the times are afflictive times, and there is now (more than ordinarie) an uncertaintie in all things in the world, in ſuch times as theſe are, there are few that have ſuch an abundance, that they need to be much taught in that Leſſon.

FINIS.